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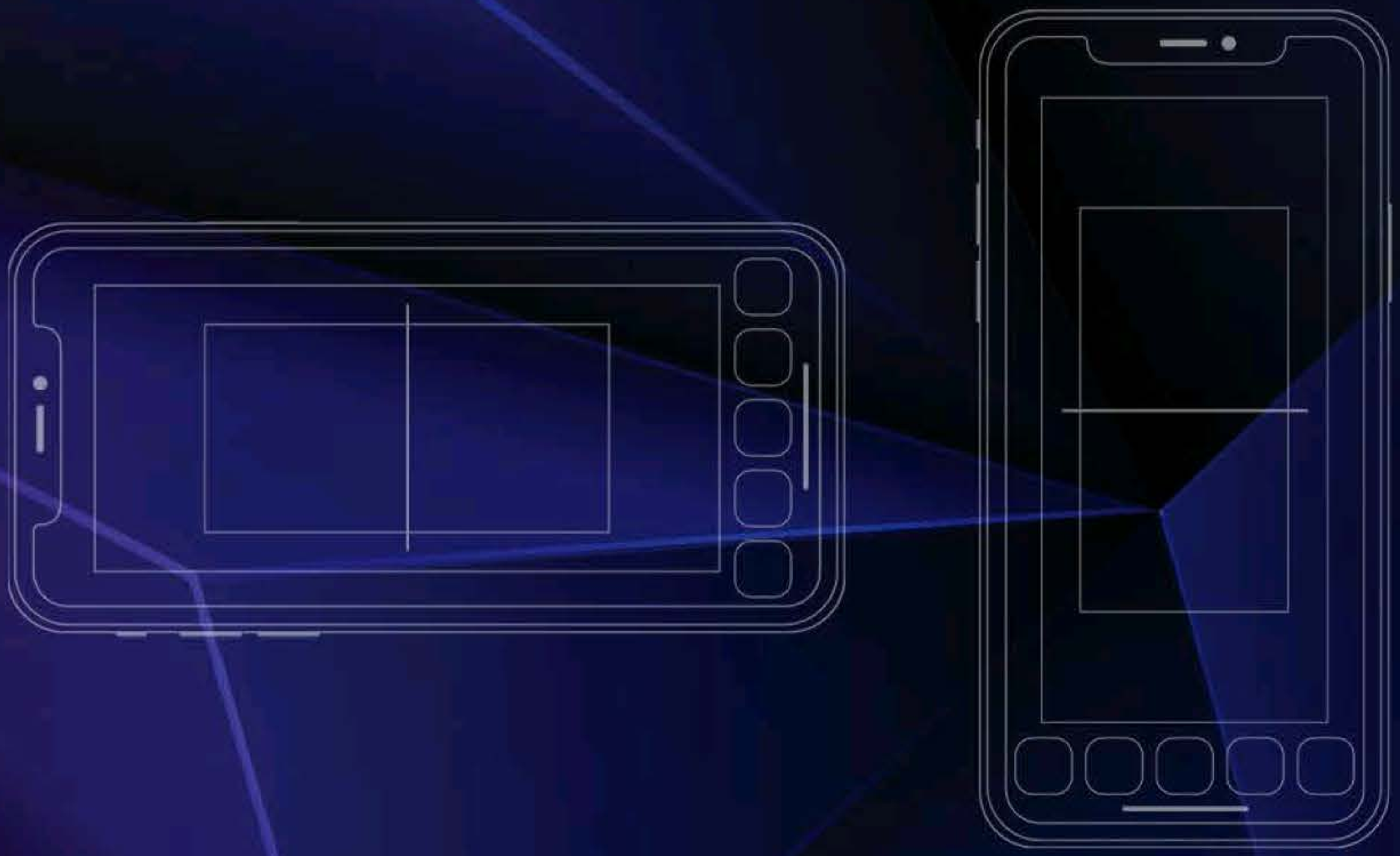

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GAS-POWERED MUSCLE CARS DRIVE INTO THE SUNSET, TURN ELECTRIC

Thundering gas-powered muscle cars, for decades a fixture of American culture, will be closing in on their final Saturday-night cruises in the coming years as automakers begin replacing them with super-fast cars that run on batteries.

Stellantis' Dodge brand, long the performance flag-bearer of the company formerly known as Fiat Chrysler, is officially moving toward electricity. On Wednesday night, Dodge unveiled a battery-powered Charger Daytona SRT concept car, which is close to one that will be produced in 2024 as the sun sets on some petroleum models.

Stellantis says it will stop making gasoline versions of the Dodge Challenger and Charger muscle cars and the Chrysler 300 large car by the end of next year. The Canadian factory that makes them will be converted to electric vehicles. Other automakers are moving — or have moved — in the same direction.

General Motors has said it will build an all-electric Chevrolet Corvette. Tesla says its Model S Plaid version is the fastest production vehicle made, able to go from zero to 60 mph (97 kilometers per hour) in under 2 seconds. Audi, Mercedes, Porsche and other European automakers already have high-performance electric models on sale. And Polestar, an electric-performance spinoff from Volvo, just announced a new Polestar 6 roadster for 2026.

One reason for the industry shift is that electric vehicles are simply faster off the starting line. Their handling is typically better, too, because their heavy batteries create a low center of gravity.

Stricter government pollution requirements are another factor, too. As automakers in the U.S. face more stringent fuel-economy requirements adopted by the Biden administration and produce a broader range of EV vehicles, they will have to jettison some of their gas-fueled muscle-car models.

Tim Kuniskis, CEO of the Dodge brand, said the possibly of government fines for not meeting gas-mileage requirements hastened the shift to the electric Charger. "Compliance fines and things like that associated with a big cast-iron supercharged V8, yes, it's tough," he said.

Still, it will take a few years for the gas-powered classics to go away.

"Over the next several years, I think we'll continue to have some internal combustion stuff, probably through most of the decade," said Sam Abuelsamid, a research analyst at Guidehouse Insights. "But increasingly, the focus is going to be on the electric ones."

Under new gas-mileage standards that were unveiled in April, the fleet of new vehicles will have to average around 40 miles per gallon in 2026, up from 25.4 mpg now, the EPA says. The standards are likely to become even stronger in the future, a trend that will compel U.S.-based automakers to shed some gasoline muscle cars if they are to avoid fines.

Of all major automakers, the EPA says, Stellantis had the lowest average fuel economy — 21.3 miles per gallon — and the highest average carbon dioxide emissions. So the company likely will have to eliminate some models to avoid fines. Its limited-edition Charger SRT Widebody, with a supercharged 6.2-liter Hemi Hellcat V-8, for instance, gets only 12 mpg in city driving and 21 mpg on the highway.

CHALLENG
AERODY

To many gearheads, the thought of a muscle car without noise and smells is heresy. But Kuniskis says Dodge is working hard to make the electric experience match internal combustion. The Charger, he said, will generate its own air flow to make an exhaust noise that rivals gas performance cars. And the transmission will shift gears.

When the electric Charger was driven through a garage door and entered a building Wednesday night at a racetrack in Pontiac, Michigan, it roared just like a gas muscle car.

Electric vehicles, Kuniskis said, have the potential to perform better than gas muscle cars with fast acceleration. But he said they are kind of sterile. "It doesn't have the emotion. It doesn't have the drama. It doesn't have the kind of dangerous feeling that ICE (an internal combustion engine) has when it's loud and rumbling and shifting and moving the car around."

Kuniskis wouldn't say how fast the electric Charger will go from zero to 60 mph, but said it would be faster than the company's current petroleum performance cars. He also wouldn't say the range-per-charge for the new Challenger, but added that range isn't as important as making it a true muscle car.

Rick Nelson, the owner of Musclecar Restoration & Design in Pleasant Plains, Illinois, near Springfield, cautioned that switching from loud fuel-burning engines to quiet electricity may be a hard sell to old-timers who grew up with the sounds and smells of racing.

Nelson, 61, said he restored his first car while a teenager and spent hours at drag strips. He acknowledged that the switch to electricity

is inevitable and is needed to attract a new generation that has become used to quiet speed. Still, he said, electric muscle cars won't have manual shifters, and he'll miss the smell of racing fuel at the track.

Already, Nelson said, businesses are cropping up to put electric powertrains in classic muscle cars. He has been in touch with an engineer at Tesla about retrofitting batteries and electric motors into some classics.

"Guys like me are just going to frown on it and laugh at it," Nelson said of electric muscle cars. "But this isn't about my generation."

Kuniskis says the shift to electricity doesn't mean the end of the muscle car. It's just a new era.

"It' s OK," he said. "Let us show you what the future looks like."

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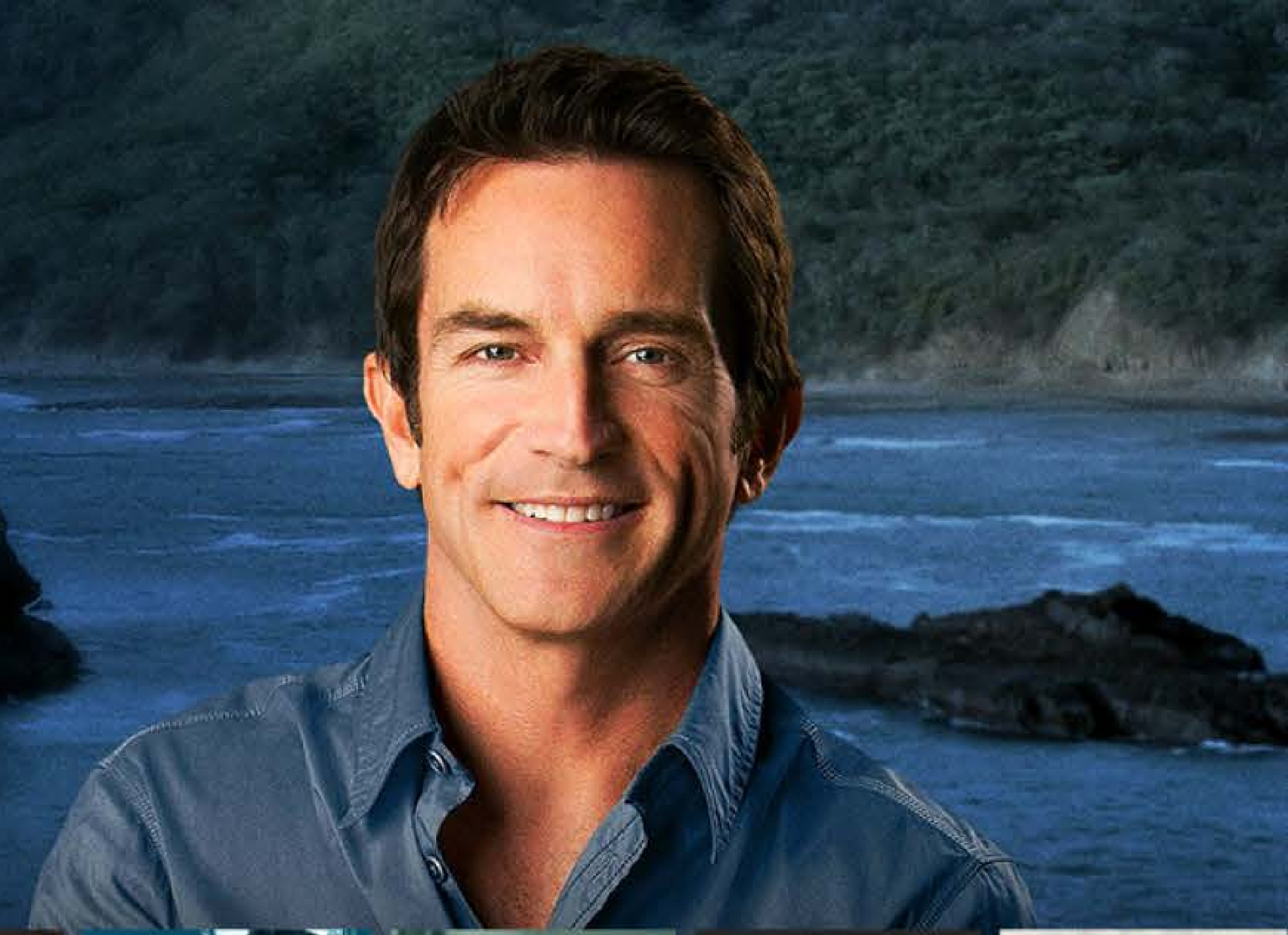

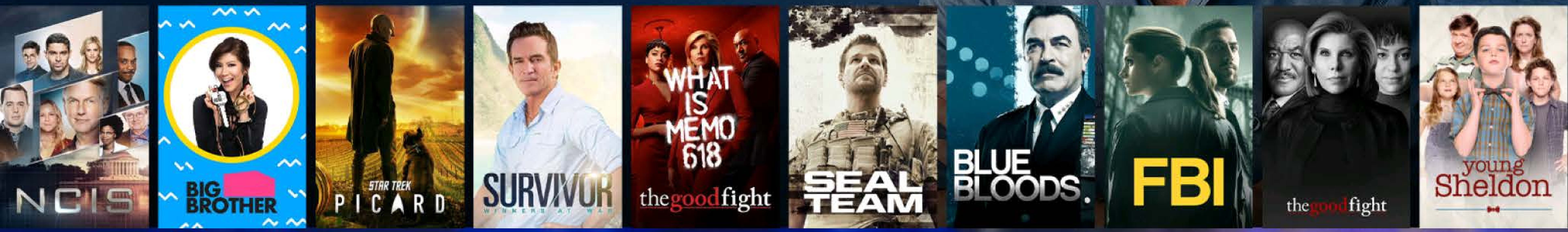
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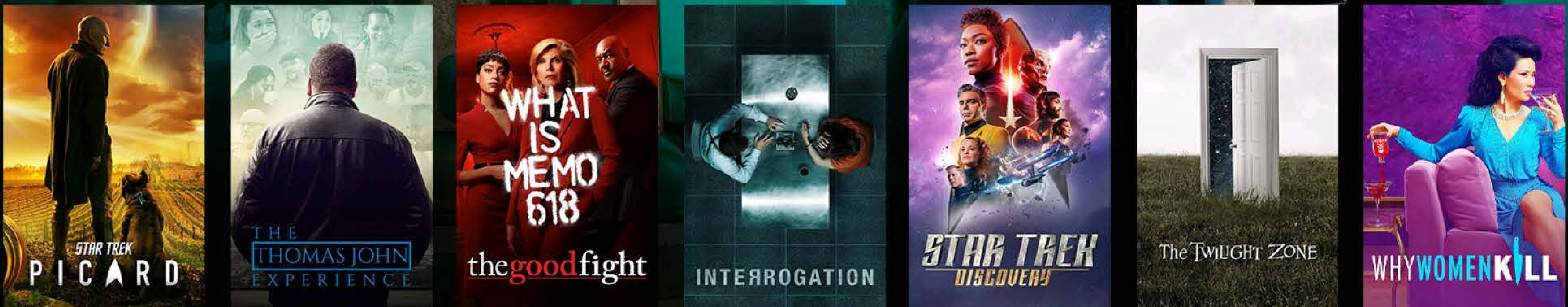
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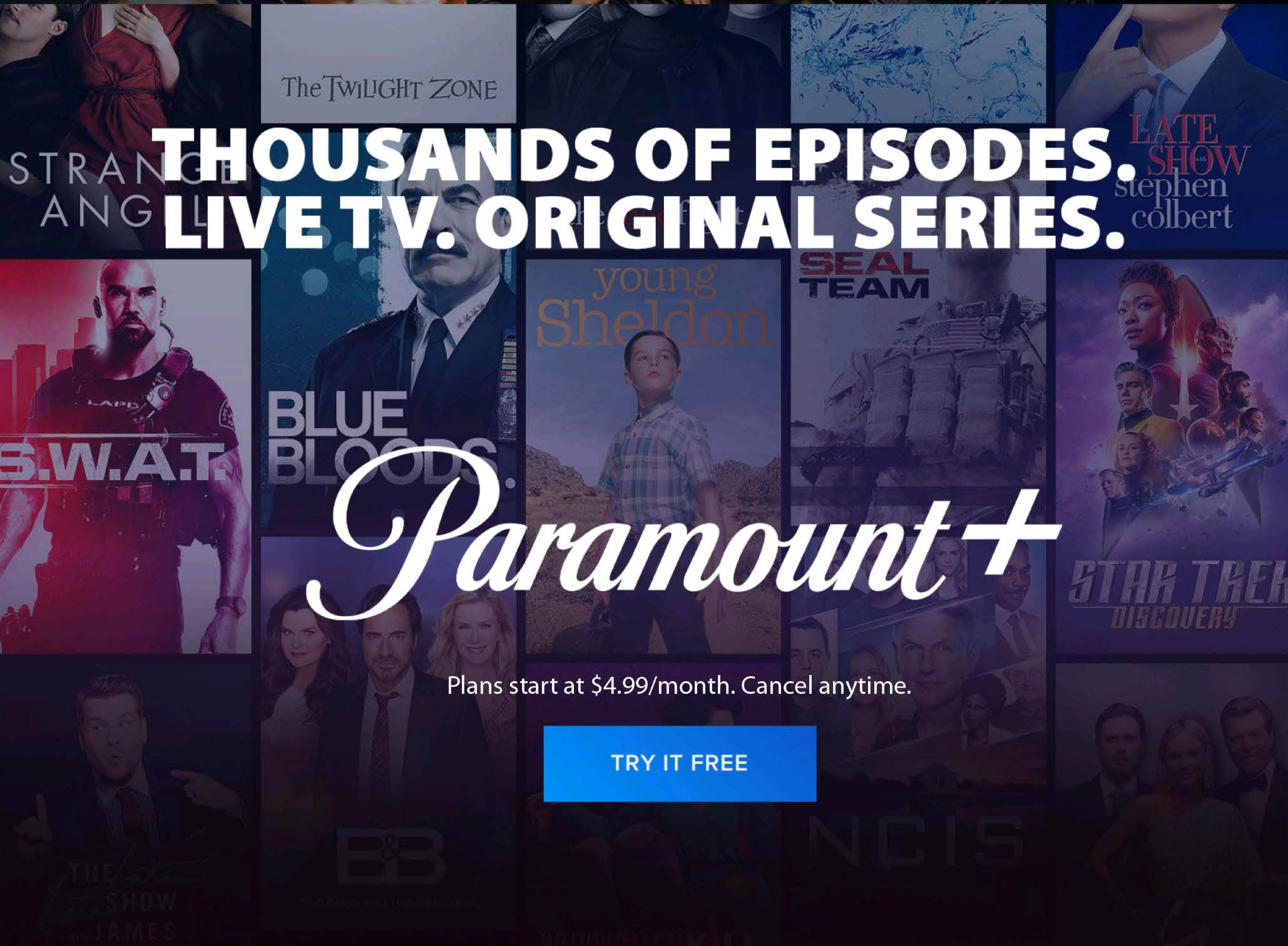

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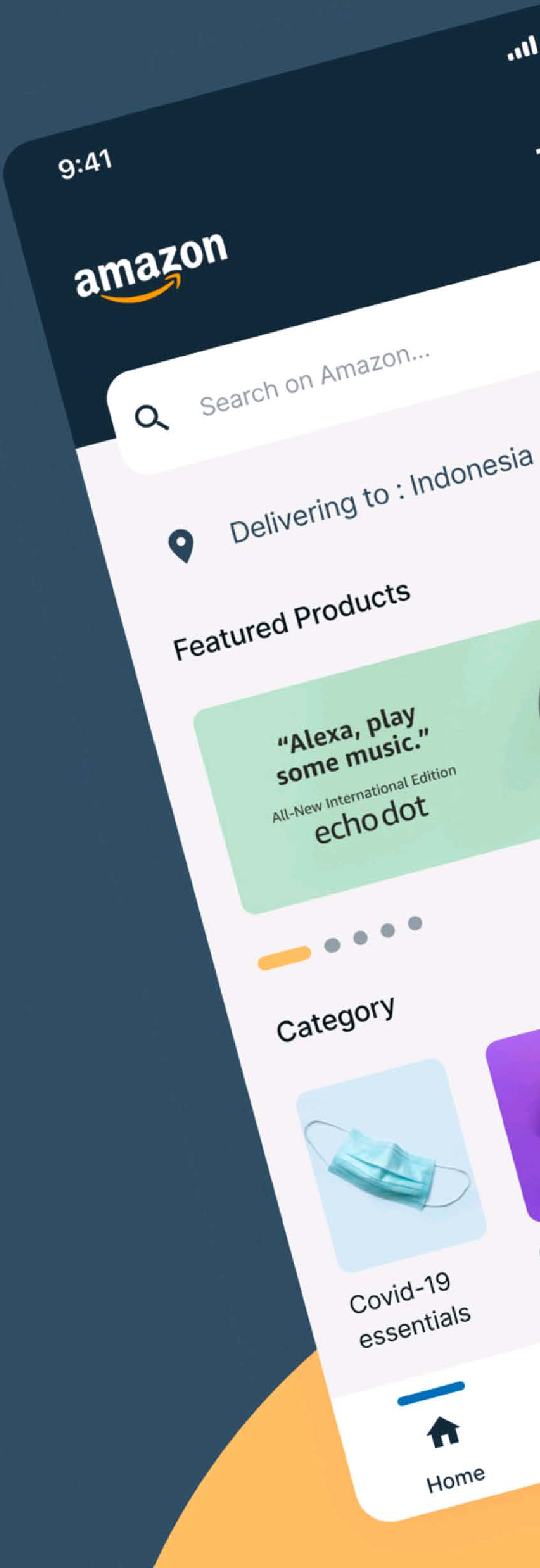
AMAZON TESTING TIKTOK-STYLE FEED ON ITS APP, AI FIRM SAYS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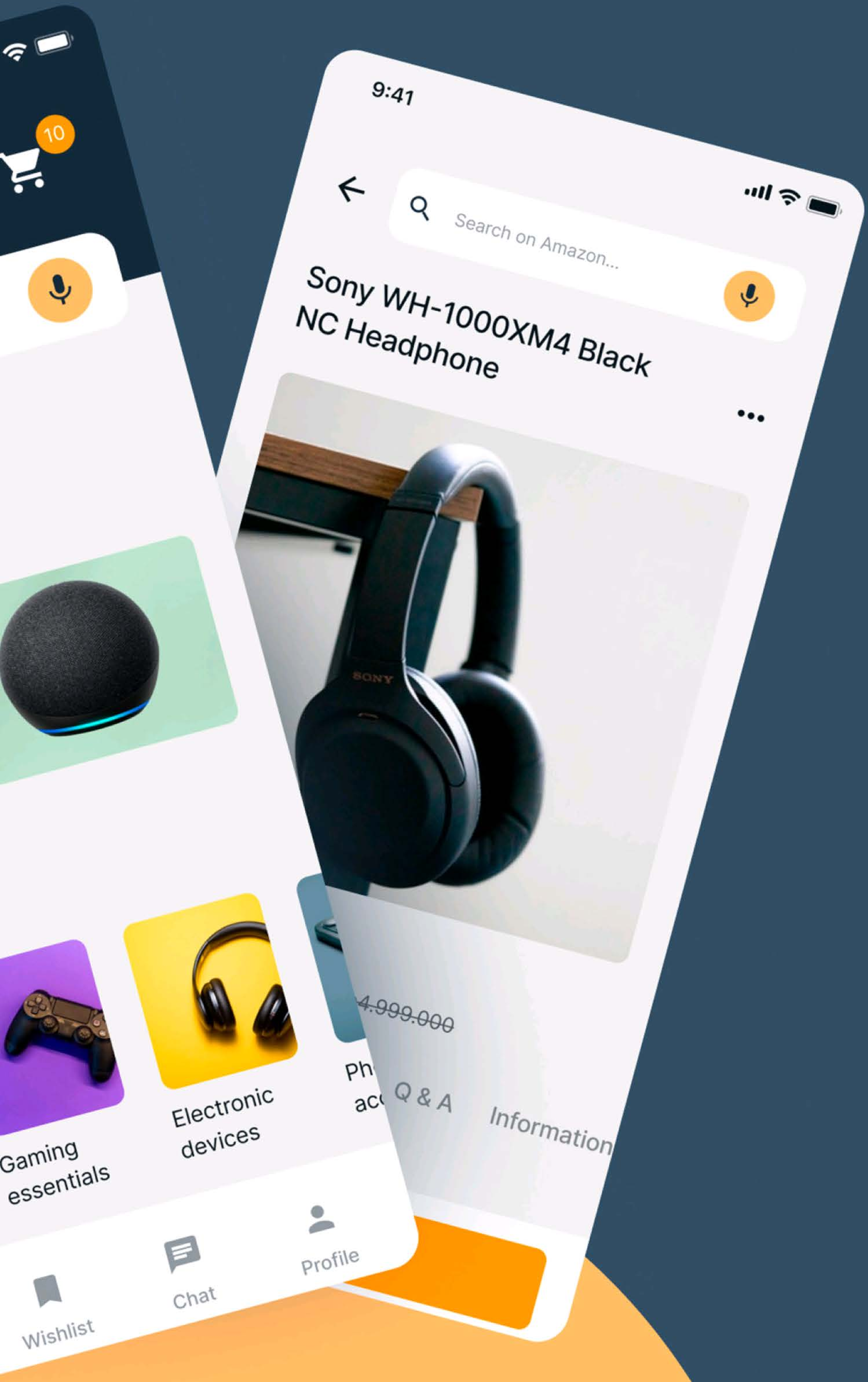
Amazon appears to be getting the TikTok bug, joining other companies seeking to hold consumers' attention by introducing replicas of the popular social platform.

The e-commerce giant has been testing a feed on its app that enables shoppers to scroll through TikTok-like photos and videos of products posted by other users.

Using the feature, called Inspire, customers can like, save and share posts of products, and purchase items directly from the feed, according to Watchful Technologies, an Israeli-based artificial-intelligence firm that analyzes apps and has tracked the feature.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The test doesn't mean Amazon will roll out the widget to the public in its current form — or at all. Alyssa Bronikowski, an Amazon spokesperson, declined to say if the company has plans to introduce the feature to all its customers. In a statement, Bronikowski said the company is "constantly testing new features to help make customers' lives a little easier."

The Wall Street Journal first reported on the test. Citing an anonymous source, the Journal also said the company is testing the feature among a small number of Amazon employees.

Amazon often experiments with new features, sometimes even targeting its tests to specific regions. Amid regulatory pressure about its private-label business, the company had been testing how to identify its brands in search results by tagging them with badges such as "Amazon brand" or "Exclusive to Amazon," the research firm Marketplace Pulse discovered earlier this year.

In its current form, the experimental TikTok-like feed mostly shows photos, said Daniel Buchuk, a researcher with Watchful Technologies. But if the feature is rolled out, Buchuk suspects the feed will be video-heavy as Amazon sellers create content to make it more engaging for customers.

The corporate parents of Google and Facebook, the two biggest sellers in digital advertising, already have been pushing their own TikTok clones in bids to keep eyeballs glued to their services so they can continue to boost their revenue.

Google's YouTube video service rolled a "Shorts" feature limited to clips of a minute or less last year in the U.S. after initially testing it in India during 2020. By June of this year, Google said YouTube Shorts was attracting more than 1.5 billion logged-in users each month, although analysts believe TikTok's popularity is undercutting ad sales at the video site.

Those concerns were elevated by Google's latest quarterly results, which revealed YouTube's year-over-year growth in ad sales had slowed to its slowest pace since public disclosures of the site's revenue began.

Meanwhile, Facebook now offers its own take on TikTok, a short-form video feature called Reels, on its Instagram app as well as its main social networking service, which are now operate as part of Meta Platforms. Earlier this year, Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg said Reels accounted for more than 20% of the time that people spend on Instagram.

But it's not clear that engagement is helping to drive ad sales after Meta recently reported its first year-over-year drop in quarterly revenue since Facebook went public a decade ago.

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RUSSIAN SPACEWALK CUT SHORT BY BAD BATTERY IN COSMONAUT SUIT

A Russian spacewalker had to rush back inside the International Space Station on Wednesday when the battery voltage in his spacesuit suddenly dropped.

Russian Mission Control ordered Oleg Artemyev, the station commander, to quickly return to the airlock so he could hook his suit to station power. The hatch remained open as his spacewalking partner, Denis Matveev, tidied up outside.

NASA said neither man was ever in any danger. Matveev, in fact, remained outside for another hour or so, before he, too, was ordered to wrap it up. Matveev's suit was fine, but Russian

ФП-11
ФП-7
П2

Mission Control cut the spacewalk short since flight rules insist on the buddy system.

The cosmonauts managed to install cameras on the European Space Agency's new robot arm before the trouble cropped up, barely two hours into a planned 6 1/2-hour spacewalk.

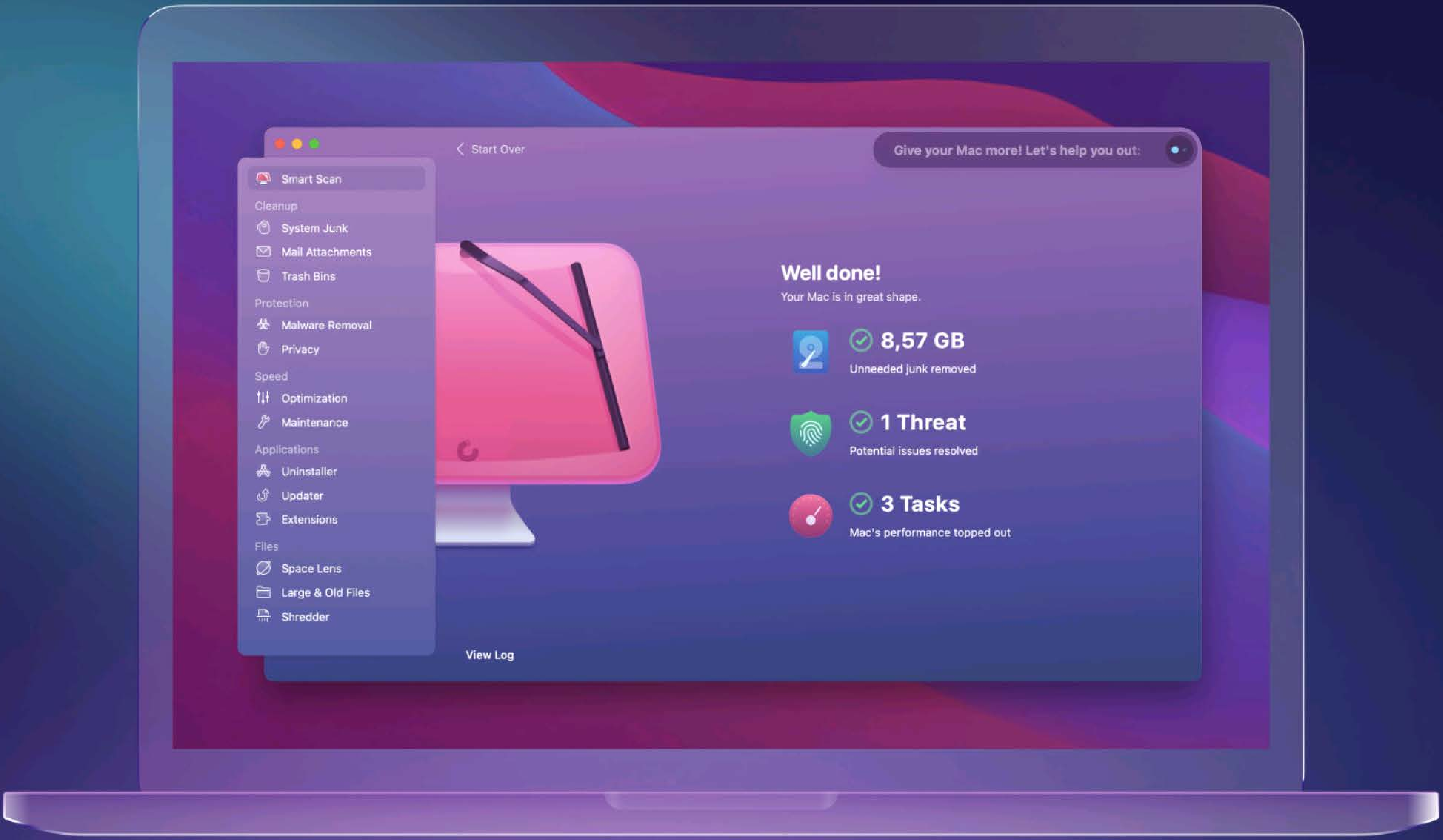
"You know, the start was so excellent," Matveev said as he made his way back inside, with some of the robot arm installation work left undone.

The 36-foot (11-meter) robot arm arrived at the space station last summer aboard a Russian lab.

NASA spacewalks, meanwhile, have been on hold for months.

In March, water seeped into a German spacewalker's helmet. It was not nearly as much leakage as occurred in 2013 when an Italian astronaut almost drowned, but still posed a safety concern. In the earlier case, the water originated from the cooling system in the suit's undergarments.

The spacesuit that malfunctioned in March will be returned to Earth as early as this week in a SpaceX capsule, for further investigation.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MISSOURI HALTS SOLAR TAX BREAK AS FEDERAL INCENTIVES EXPAND

As the U.S. government expands incentives for renewable energy, a decision by the Missouri Supreme Court is moving the state in the opposite direction by halting a solar energy tax break that has been on the books for nearly a decade.

Legislation signed by President Joe Biden pumps about $375 billion over a decade into initiatives intended to combat climate change. Those include expanded tax breaks for the production of clean energy, such as wind and solar power, and for consumers to install solar panels on their property.

Democrats passed the legislation through a divided Congress last week, around the same time that Missouri's highest court struck down a 2013 state law granting a property tax exemption for certain solar energy systems. The court said the tax break wasn't allowed under the state constitution.

The case involved a privately run solar farm supplying energy for City Utilities of Springfield, which serves Missouri's third largest city. As a result of the ruling, the company owning the solar energy farm will owe at least $423,360 in property taxes from 2017 to 2020, said Greene County Collector Allen Icet.

It's not clear how many other solar energy sites across Missouri could be affected by the ruling, or exactly how much tax revenue is at stake.

But the ruling could have a chilling effect on solar energy development in Missouri, just as the federal government is trying to encourage it.

"This obviously would put a big kink and cost in the way of someone trying to lay out a large panel system, if you've got to pay taxes on the material generating this renewable, free energy," said Jon Dolan, executive director of the Missouri Solar Energy Industries Association.

Federal and state governments have long offered some sort of incentives for solar energy. A federal income tax credit for people who install solar panels on their property, or make other energy efficient improvements, has been renewed multiple times since 2005. The legislation signed by Biden extends the tax credit through 2034.

The new federal law also includes billions of dollars for tax credits to spur investment in clean-energy manufacturing facilities and to offset the

production costs of such things as solar panels, wind turbines and batteries.

Beginning in the early 2000s, many states also financed rebates for residents to make energy efficient improvements. While some of those program have been phased out, states have continued to offer other incentives for renewable energy.

Missouri was one of 38 states, and the District of Columbia, offering some sort of property tax break for solar energy systems, according to a database kept by the N.C. Clean Energy Technology Center at North Carolina State University. Some states offer full tax exemptions while others provide relief only for a limited time or only for residential solar systems. Some states have given local officials the authority to waive property taxes for solar energy systems.

The Missouri court ruling "is an outlier" nationally, said Brian Lips, senior project manager for policy at the N.C. Clean Energy Technology Center.

"Many of these incentives are basically on autopilot at this point," Lips said. "So it's interesting for a state to question something, especially something that has been in place for so long."

Missouri won't be devoid solar energy incentives. A new state law taking effect Aug. 28 will offer a sales tax exemption to companies that purchase components to construct solar energy systems. That law also creates a task force to study solar energy policies, focused particularly on those who distribute energy from their own solar panels to the electric grid.

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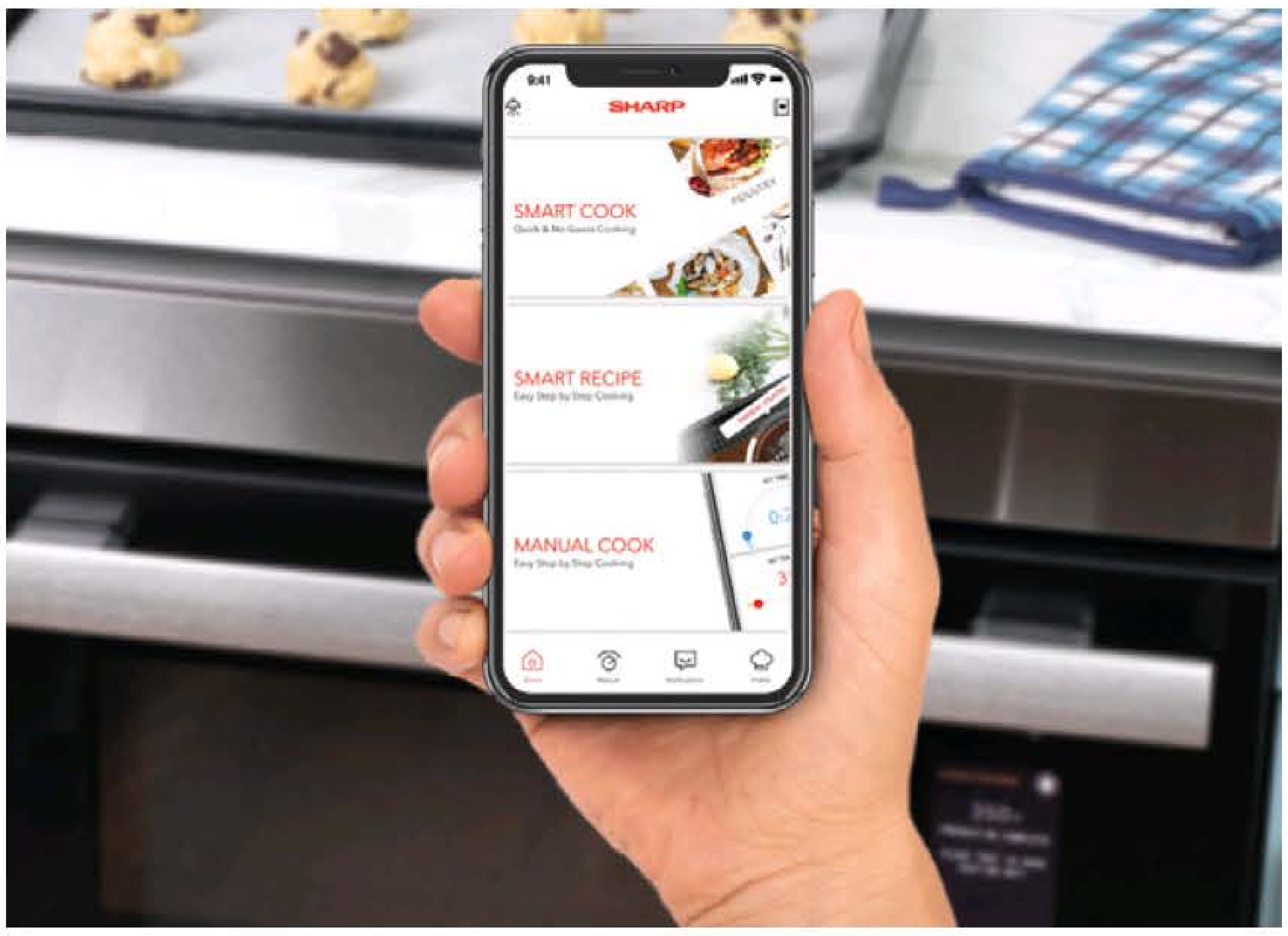

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FOR

AVERAGE LONG-TERM MORTGAGE RATES RETREAT SLIGHTLY THIS WEEK

Average long-term U.S. mortgage rates came back down slightly this week after the key 30-year loan rate jumped nearly a quarter point last week.

Mortgage buyer Freddie Mac reported that the 30-year rate fell to 5.13% from 5.22% last week. Last year at this time, the rate stood at 2.86%.

The average rate on 15-year, fixed-rate mortgages, popular among those looking to refinance their homes, inched down to 4.55% from 4.59% last week. One year ago, it was 2.16%.

Rapidly rising interest rates — which add hundreds of dollars to monthly mortgage payments — have pushed many potential homebuyers to the sideline this year, cooling the once red-hot housing market.

The National Association of Realtors said that existing home sales fell for the sixth consecutive month in July, slowed by higher mortgage rates and home prices that are still steadily rising, though at a slower pace.

The national median home price jumped 10.8% in July from a year earlier to $403,800. A few months ago, the year-over-year price increase for an existing home was around 15%.

Sales of previously occupied homes fell 5.9% from June and are off more than 20% from a year ago.

The Federal Reserve has increased its main borrowing rate four times this year in an effort to curb four-decade high inflation. Mortgage rates don't necessarily mirror the Fed's rate increases. They tend to track the yield on the 10-year Treasury note, which is influenced by a variety of factors, including investors' expectations for future inflation and global demand for U.S. Treasurys.

Recently, faster inflation and strong U.S. economic growth have sent the 10-year Treasury rate up sharply.

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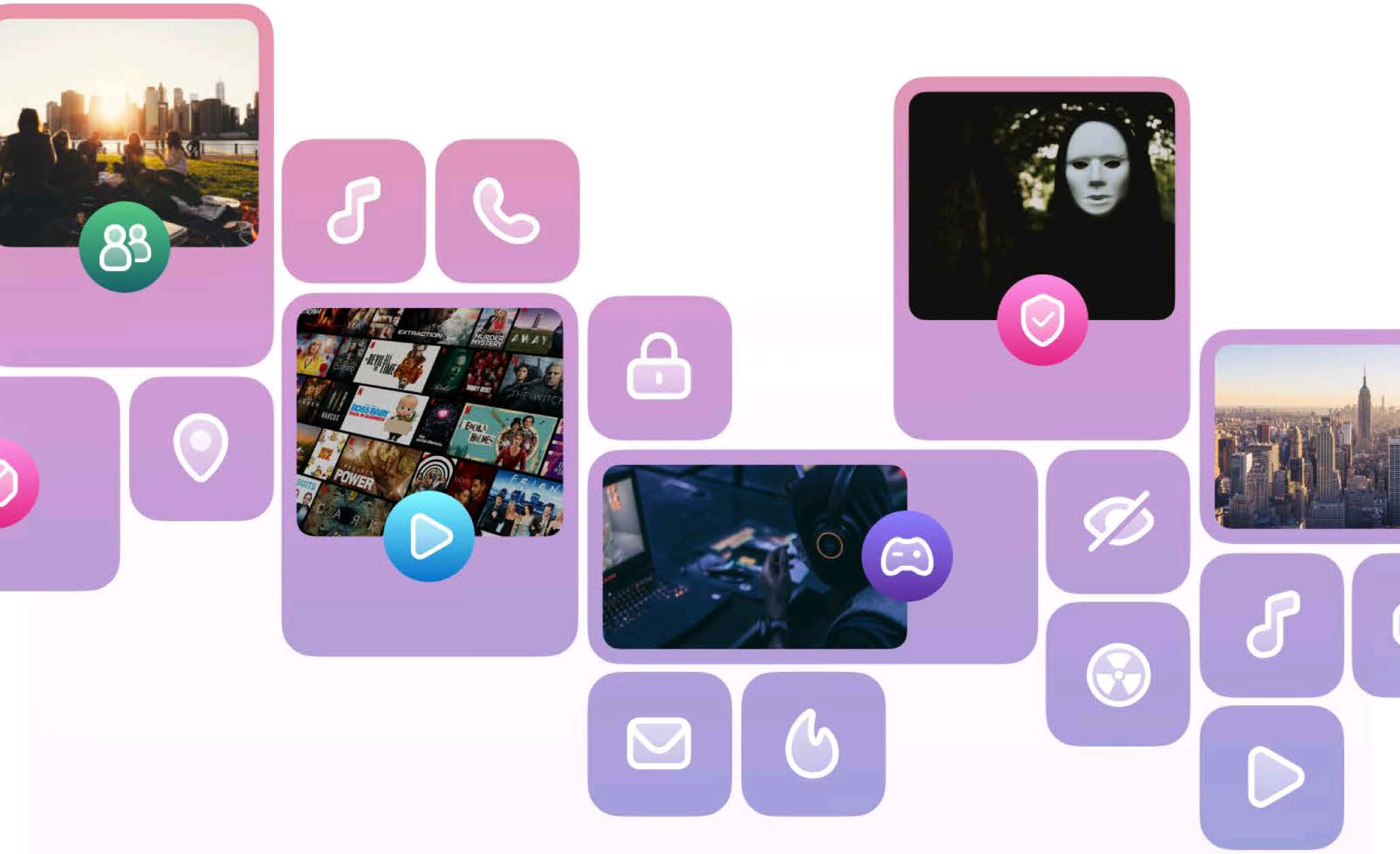

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The U.S. government plans talks with Taiwan on a wide-ranging trade treaty in a sign of support for the self-ruled island democracy claimed by China's ruling Communist Party as part of its territory.

The announcement Thursday comes after Beijing held military drills that included firing missiles into the sea to intimidate Taiwan following this month's visit by U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

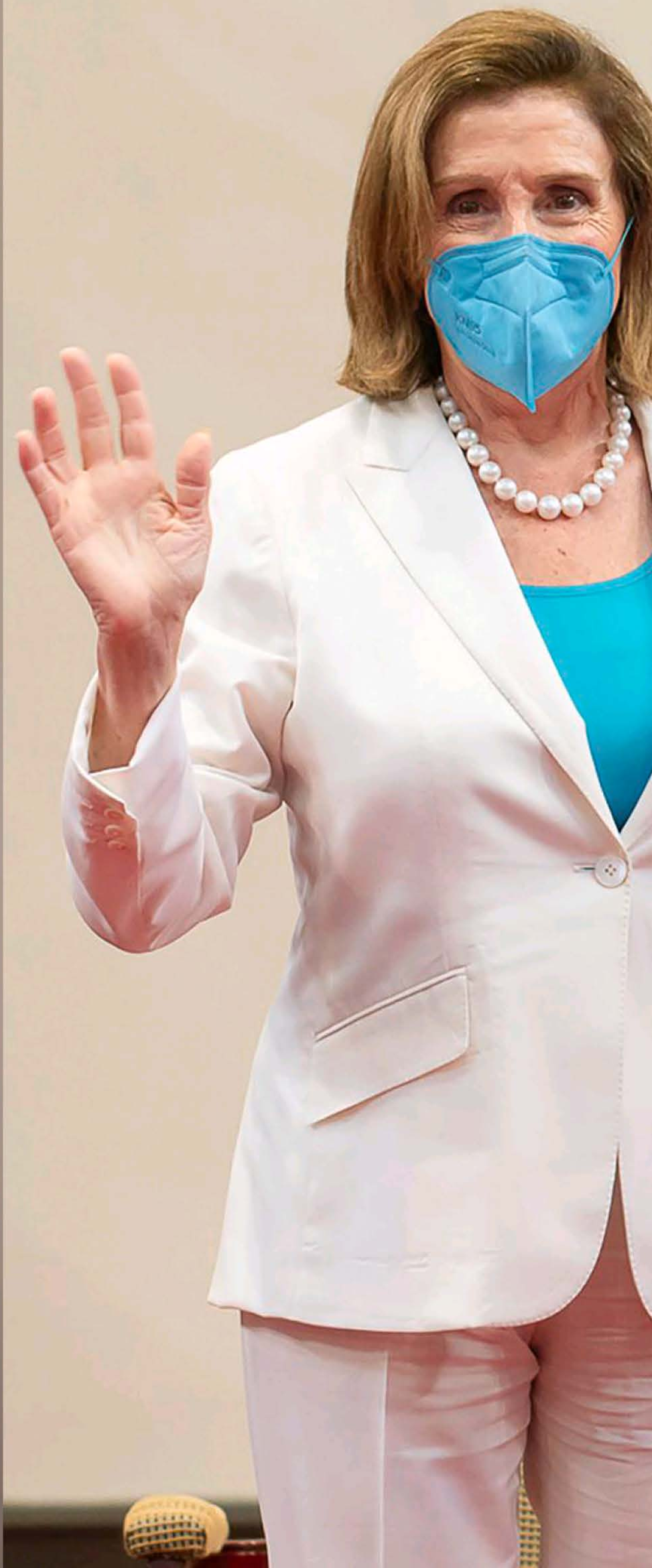
The U.S. Trade Representative's office made no mention of tension with Beijing but said the "formal negotiations" were meant to enhance trade and regulatory cooperation, which would entail closer official interaction.

President Joe Biden's coordinator for the Indo-Pacific region, Kurt Campbell, told reporters last week that trade talks would be part of efforts to "deepen our ties with Taiwan," though he said U.S. policy wasn't changing.

Taiwan and China split in 1949 after a civil war. The island never has been part of the People's Republic of China, but the Communist Party says it is obliged to united politically with the mainland, by force if necessary.

The United States has no official relations with Taiwan but maintains extensive ties through its unofficial embassy, the American Institute in Taiwan.

Chinese President Xi Jinping's government says official contact with Taiwan such as Pelosi's Aug. 2 one-day visit might embolden the island to try to make its decade-old de facto independence permanent, a step Beijing says would lead to war.



American Institut

te in Taiwan 美

Washington says it takes no position on the status of China and Taiwan but wants their dispute settled peacefully. The U.S. government is obligated by federal law to see that the island has the means to defend itself.

"We will continue to take calm and resolute steps to uphold peace and stability in the face of Beijing's ongoing efforts to undermine it, and to support Taiwan," Campbell said during a conference call last Friday.

A second group of U.S. lawmakers led by Sen. Ed Markey, a Democrat from Massachusetts, arrived on Taiwan on Sunday and met with President Tsai Ing-wen. Beijing announced a second round of military drills following their arrival.

Beijing had no immediate reaction to the trade talks announcement.

The talks also will cover agriculture, labor, the environment, digital technology, the status of state-owned enterprises and "non-market policies," the USTR said.

It gave no indication which officials would be involved but said talks would be held under the auspices of the American Institute and Taiwan's informal embassy, the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States.

U.S.-Chinese relations are their lowest level in decades amid disputes about security, technology, Beijing's treatment of Muslim minorities and its crackdown in Hong Kong.

They are are locked in a 3-year-old tariff war over disputes in many of the areas mentioned in Thursday's announcement. They include China's support for government companies that

dominate many of its industries and complaints Beijing steals foreign technology and hampers foreign competitors in an array of fields in violation of its market-opening commitments.

Then-President Donald Trump raised tariffs on Chinese goods in 2019 in response to complaints its technology development tactics violate its free-trade commitments and threaten U.S. industrial leadership. President Joe Biden has left most of those tariff hikes in place.

Taiwan, with 24 million people, is the ninth-largest U.S. trading partner and the 10th-largest U.S. export market, according to the USTR. The State Department describes it as a "key U.S. partner in the Indo-Pacific."

Taiwan is the main global source of processor chips for smartphones, medical devices, autos and home appliances, as well as industrial components used by factories in China and other Asian countries.

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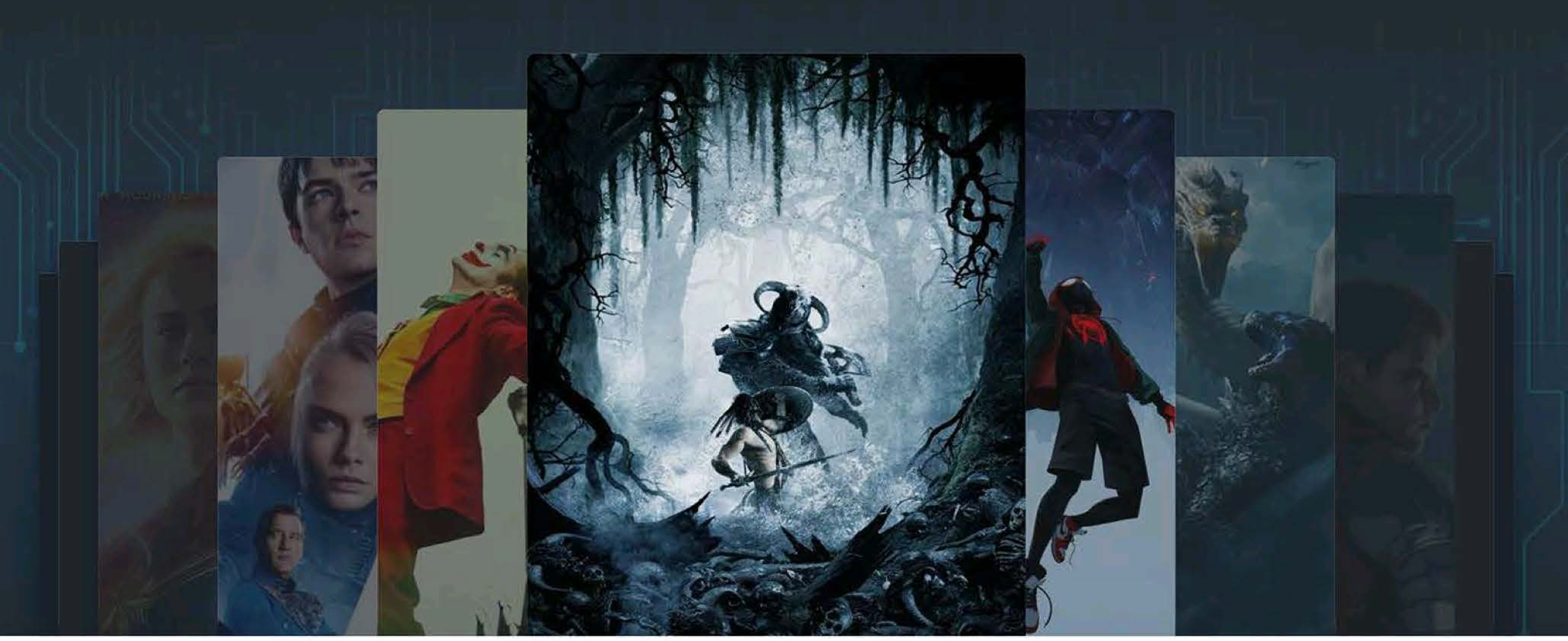

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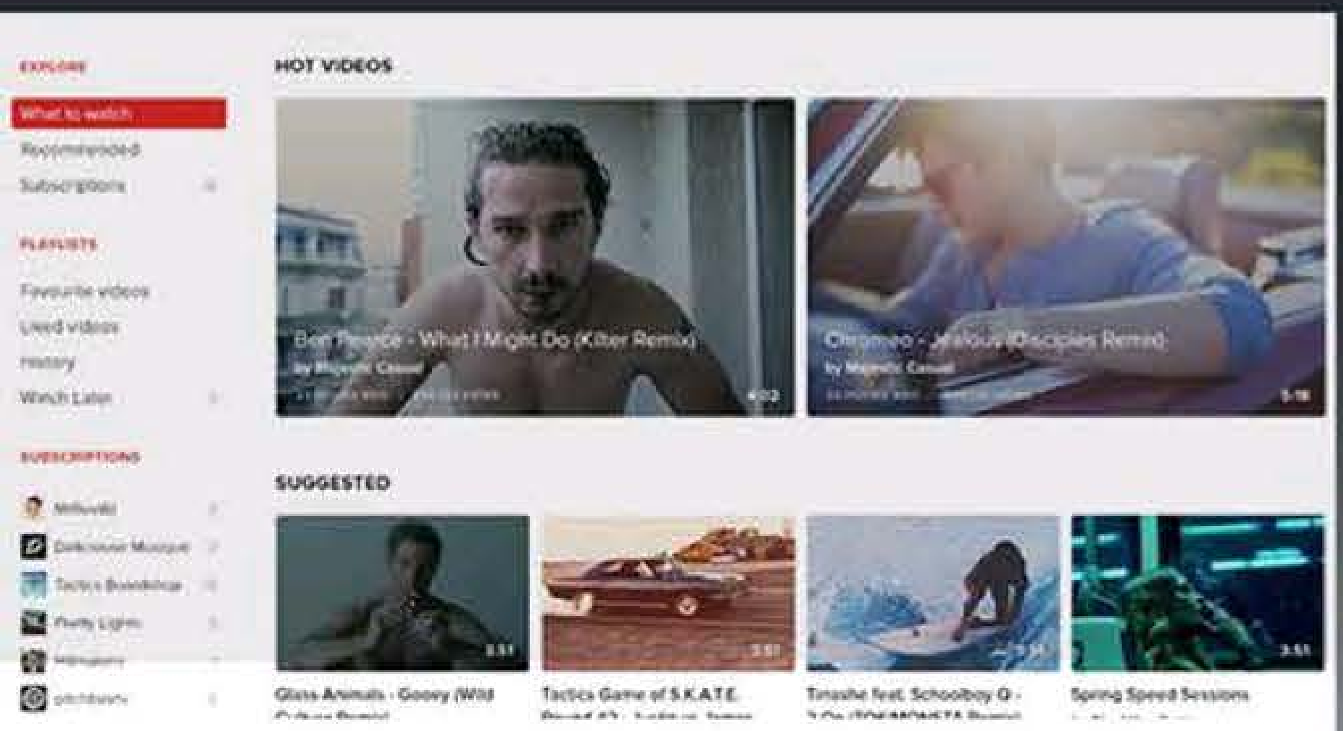

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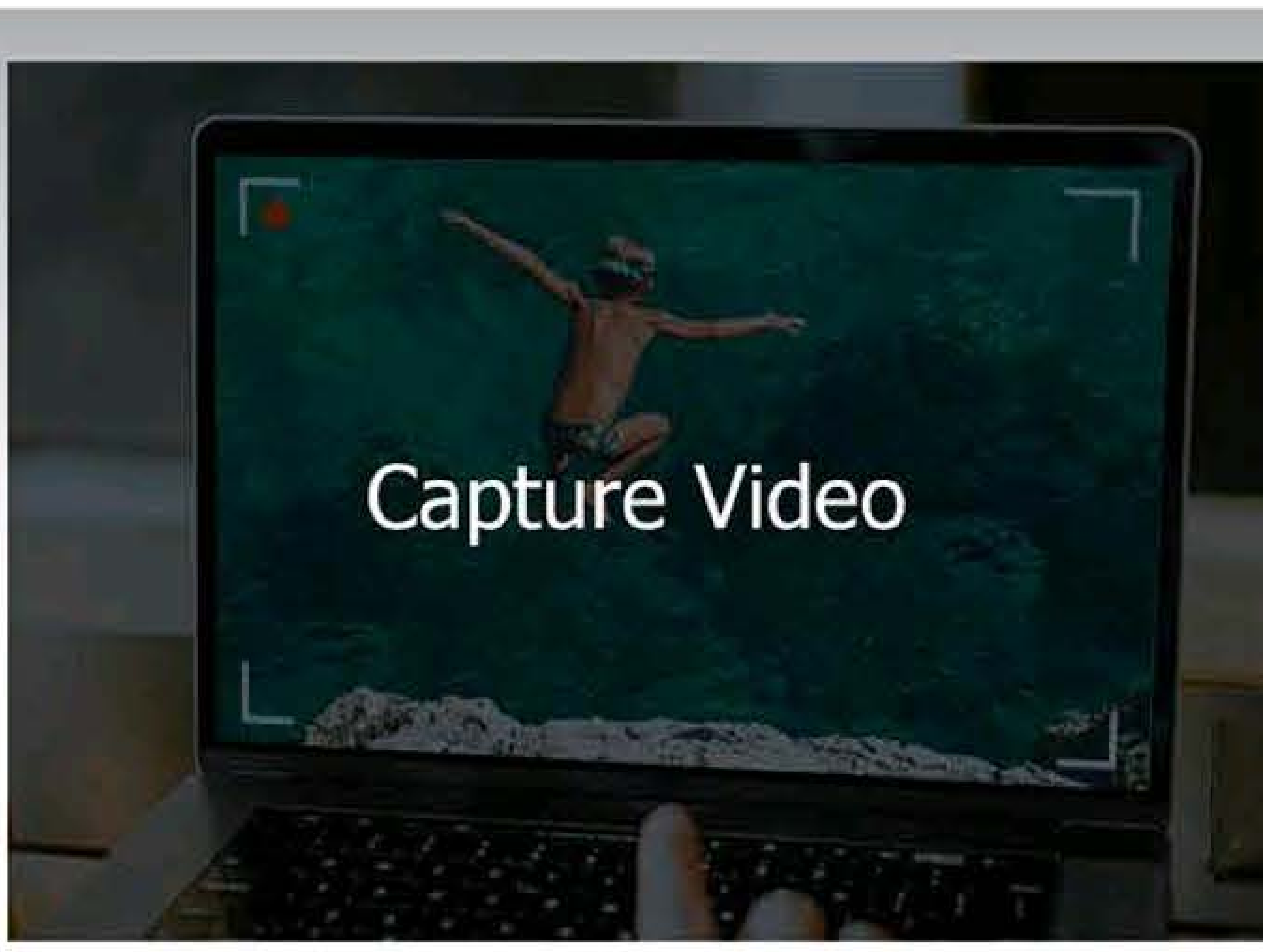

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OVERTURE
N2800M
BOOM

AMERICAN AIRLINES PLACES DEPOSIT ON 20 SUPERSONIC PLANES

American Airlines has agreed to buy up to 20 supersonic jets and put down a non-refundable deposit on the planes that are still on the drawing board and years away from flying.

Neither American nor the manufacturer Boom Supersonic would provide financial details Tuesday, including the amount of American's deposit.

American, which also took options for 40 more Boom Overture planes, becomes the second U.S. customer for Boom after a similar announcement last year from United Airlines for 15 jets.

OVERTURE

OVERTURE
N2800M
BOOM

It has been nearly 20 years since the last supersonic passenger flight by Concorde, the British-French plane that failed to catch on because of the high cost — both for passengers and airlines.

Boom CEO Blake Scholl insists his company's plane will be different when it debuts in 2029, with tickets costing about $4,000 to $5,000 to fly from New York to London in about three and one-half hours.

"There are tens of millions of passengers every year flying in business class on routes where Overture will give a big speed-up," Scholl said in an interview, "and airlines will be able to do it profitably."

Boom says its plane will have a top speed of 1.7 times the speed of sound, or about 1,300 mph, and carry between 65 and 80 passengers.

Skeptics have questioned Boom's ambitious timetable, especially in light of the many years it has taken Boeing, an established manufacturer, to get planes or even retrofits to planes approved by the Federal Aviation Administration.

Notably, Boom does not yet have an engine manufacturer lined up. It is talking with Rolls Royce and others.

"With a supersonic jet, you don't design a plane, you design an engine first," said Richard Aboulafia, an aerospace analyst at consultant AeroDynamic Advisory. "This is just a collection of freehand drawings until that engine happens."

Boom says the plane will fly entirely on sustainable aviation fuel, often made from plant material, which is currently in short supply and very expensive.

N2800M
BOOM

Boom, which is based in Denver and plans to build the Overture in North Carolina, says the program will cost between $6 billion and $8 billion. The plane carries a list price of $200 million, although other manufacturers routinely give airlines deep discounts.

Last month, Boom announced changes to the plane's design to make it simpler and less expensive to build and maintain. The most striking change was going from three engines, including a different type on the tail, to four identical engines under the delta-shaped wings.

The market for four-engine planes is shrinking. The Boeing 747 is used mostly for hauling cargo now, and Airbus shut down production of the A380 in 2021. The vast majority of passenger jets flying today have two engines.

DANGER
DANGER

Four-engine planes “are that much worse from every standpoint, from economics to emissions,” Aboulafia said. “Nobody wants more engines, the answer is fewer engines.”

While American and United have said they’ll buy Boom’s plane, Delta Air Lines, the other big U.S. carrier that could use it on long international flights, isn’t ready to join them.

“I have a lot more questions than answers still,” Delta CEO Ed Bastian said Tuesday on Fox Business. “Until we are confident that we could actually generate a reliable return from the aircraft, that’s not where we’re investing.”

American Airlines said the supersonic plane will change travel.

“Looking to the future, supersonic travel will be an important part of our ability to deliver for our customers,” said Derek Kerr, the airline’s chief financial officer.

The union representing American’s pilots questioned the timing of the airline’s investment in planes that won’t be available for several years at best. American has struggled this summer, canceling more than 9,300 flights since June 1 — more than double the cancellations at United, Delta or Southwest — according to FlightAware.

“Investing in today’s operation should be management’s sole focus,” said Dennis Tajer, a spokesman for the union. “If there aren’t any changes to how management schedules this airline and its pilots, these will just be supersonic cancellations.”

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YELLEN TELLS IRS TO DEVELOP MODERNIZATION PLAN IN 6 MONTHS

Now that President Joe Biden signed Democrats' expansive climate, tax and health care bill into law, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has directed the IRS to develop a plan within six months outlining how the tax agency will overhaul its technology, customer service and hiring processes.

In part, the improvements are meant to "end the two-tiered tax system, where most Americans pay what they owe, but those at the top of the distribution often do not," Yellen said in a memo to IRS Commissioner Chuck Rettig, whose term ends in three months.

Yellen's memo, outlines the importance of modernizing IRS computer systems and ensuring the agency has an adequately-staffed workforce now that the tax collector is set to receive nearly $80 billion over the next 10 years.

That funding is needed for more than technology. At least 50,000 IRS employees are expected to retire over the next five years.

Yellen has called for the IRS to "fully resolve the inventory backlog and make significant improvements in taxpayer services," "to overhaul an information technology system that is decades out of date" and invest and train employees "so they can identify the most complex evasion schemes by those at the top."

This year's tax season resulted in the worst backlog in history for the beleaguered IRS, which has also been tasked with administering pandemic related programs, including sending out stimulus checks, emergency rental assistance and advance child tax credit checks.

In its June report to Congress, the National Taxpayer Advocate, an independent watchdog within the IRS, also said taxpayers have experienced longer wait times on the telephone, and delays in processing paper returns have been running six months to one year.

Additional funding for the agency has been politically controversial since 2013, when the IRS under the Obama administration was found to scrutinize political groups that applied for tax-exempt status.

A Treasury Department Inspector General report found that both conservative and liberal groups were chosen for scrutiny.

Most recently, Republican politicians and candidates have distorted how the climate, tax and healthcare bill would reform the IRS and affect taxes for the middle class.

House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) last week tweeted that "Democrats' new army of 87,000 IRS agents will be coming for you -- with 710,000 new audits for Americans who earn less than $75k."

Yellen last week sent instructions to IRS leadership not to increase audit rates on Americans making under $400,000 a year annually.

"Instead, enforcement resources will focus on high-end noncompliance," she said in her Aug. 11 guidance. "There, sustained, multi-year funding is so critical to the agency's ability to make the investments needed to pursue a robust attack on the tax gap."

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Browsers

The war for the dominance of internet navigation

Image: Luca Bravo

Your internet browser is perhaps the most important piece of software on your Mac, allowing you to surf the web, access social media and emails, and conduct your day-to-day affairs. But with so many internet browsers on the market claiming to be the fastest and most secure, it can be tough to know where to start; the battle of the browser is truly heating up.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT BROWSER FOR MACOS

With consumers and professionals conducting more of their business online than ever before, it is vital that you choose the right web browser for your needs. Indeed, the average American spends an eye-watering 413 minutes on a browser every single day - that's just under seven hours - but with so many competing products, how can you choose the right software? Naturally, you'll want to prioritize speed and stability, but there's so much more to a good web browser than that. As a Mac user, you might naturally gravitate towards Safari, but it's worth considering the competition and deciding on the right platform for your needs.

According to Stat Counter, Chrome has a 66% share of the desktop market, whilst Edge commands a 10% stake, and Safari and Firefox enjoy an 8% share each. Behind that, browsers like Opera hold smaller percentages (3%). In other words, Google dominates in the browser market, but it's a different story on mobile, where Chrome has a 65% share and Safari a 23.22% share thanks to being the default browser on iOS. Companies are working harder than ever to encourage consumers to make the switch to their platforms; Microsoft Edge and Google Chrome regularly invest in advertising campaigns with influencers in an attempt to increase their market share. But which is the right web browser for your needs?

Chrome
File
Edit
View
History
Bookmarks
People
Tab
Window
Help
Google
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Privacy
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GOOGLE CHROME

First launched in 2008, Google Chrome has defied the odds to become the world's dominant browser, overtaking Microsoft's Internet Explorer and Apple's Safari and then some. Perhaps one of the reasons why Chrome is so widespread is thanks to Extensions, which allow users to add on features and functionality designed by third-party developers. From AdBlock to limit the number of ads on a page to Grammarly, which corrects spelling and grammar, there are so many ways to take Chrome to the next level and add features that make life a little easier. Chrome syncs across Google accounts, and you can add different user profiles for shared computers. Another reason why Chrome outranks many rivals is that it complies with more web standards than any other browser meaning websites should load quickly and perform in the way they should. What's more, it has a frequent update cycle which means security issues and other bugs are resolved before they become anything serious, and updates are automatically deployed, so you never have to worry about updating.

Chrome does everything you'd expect a web browser to do and then some: including the ability to automatically translate content into hundreds of languages and warn you about websites that are potentially dangerous. The reason Chrome is so successful? It's powered by Google, so all of the tools and features you love about the search engine are built into the browser. Although Chrome can be RAM-greedy, it is great for multitasking and allows you to open multiple tabs without difficulty. In benchmarks, **Chrome isn't the fastest web browser,** and **there are security and privacy concerns because of its Google links,** but there's a reason why it's the world's number one browser: it works, it does a good job, and it's the most user-friendly.

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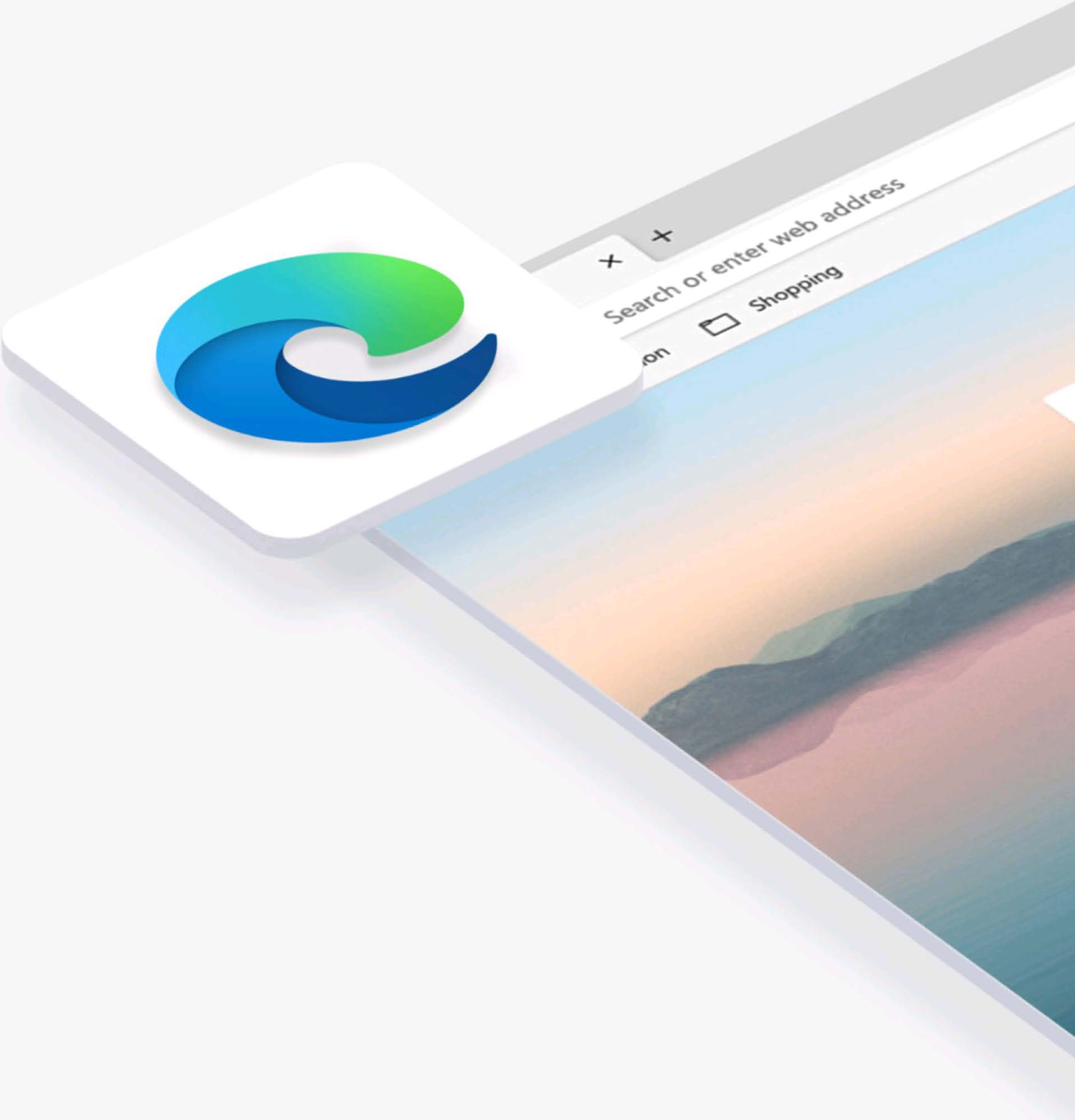
Edge
Chrome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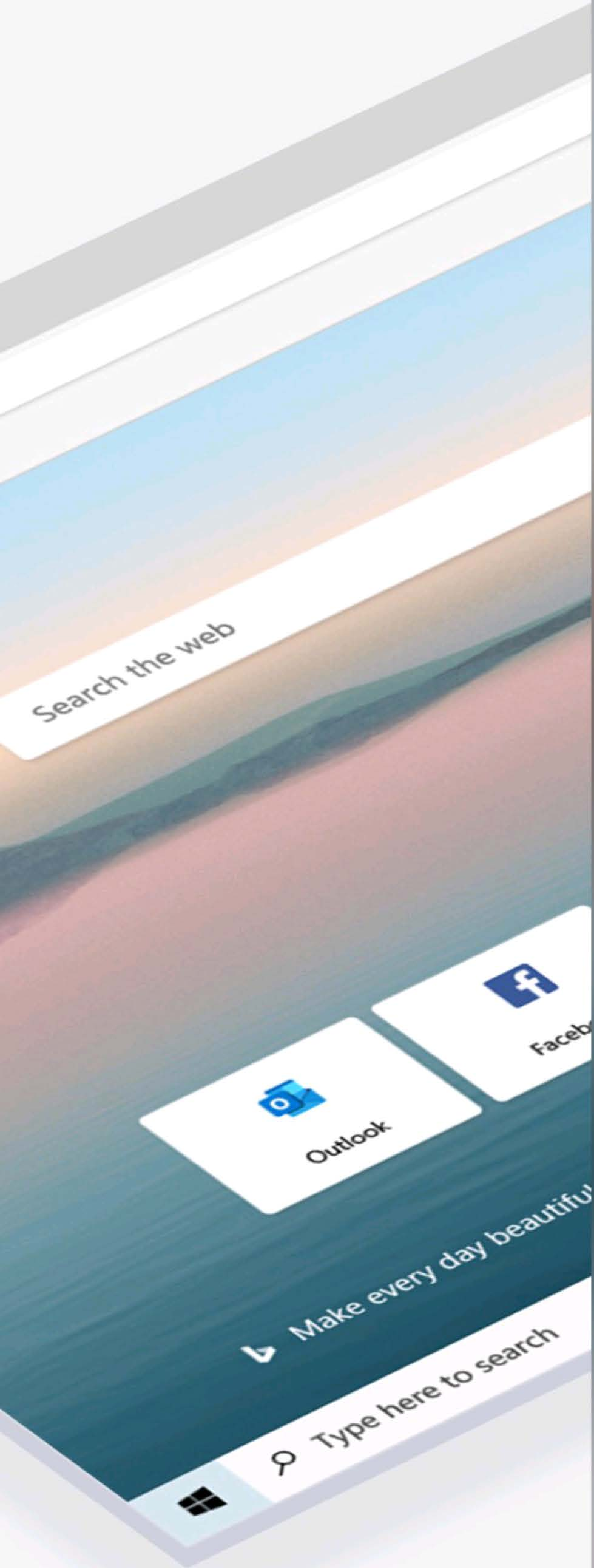


MICROSOFT EDGE

Yep, really! Since the launch of Microsoft's Edge browser, the successor to Internet Explorer, the computing giant has been introducing new tools to make it an option worth considering on the Mac. The computing company's Internet Explorer software had become something of a laughing stock in recent years, **despite being included in early versions of Mac OS X** and it officially **discontinued the browser in 2022 in favor of Microsoft Edge.** Since then, Edge has overtaken Firefox as the world's second most popular desktop browser, and thanks to a clean user interface and software that's built on the Chromium platform, it offers many of the features you will know and expect from Chrome without some of Google's bloatware: with one added benefit. Edge allows users to benefit from apps and software from the Google Chrome Store, and it offers more options for interacting with text media than other browsers. What's more, the software has its own library of extensions, and users can control their privacy with three levels of tracking prevention - but it's worth noting that Microsoft will still collect some data.

Bing is the default search engine on Edge, and it collects a lot of data on users, which it then sells onto advertisers. It's not dissimilar to the way Google sells data, and Apple too could be following suit should **it launch a search engine and look for new ways to monetize its market.** If you want a secure and private browsing experience, Edge isn't for you.

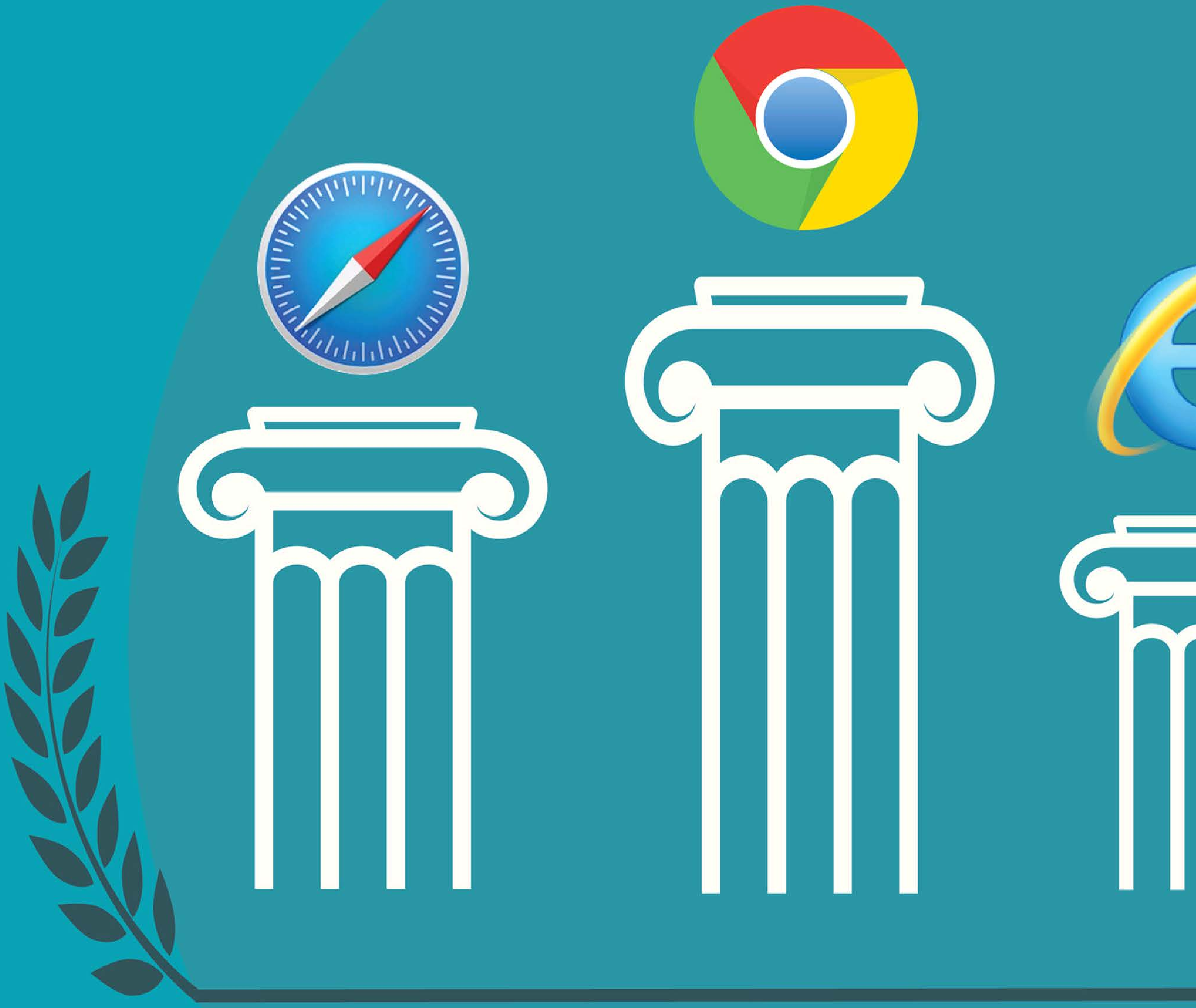
Go

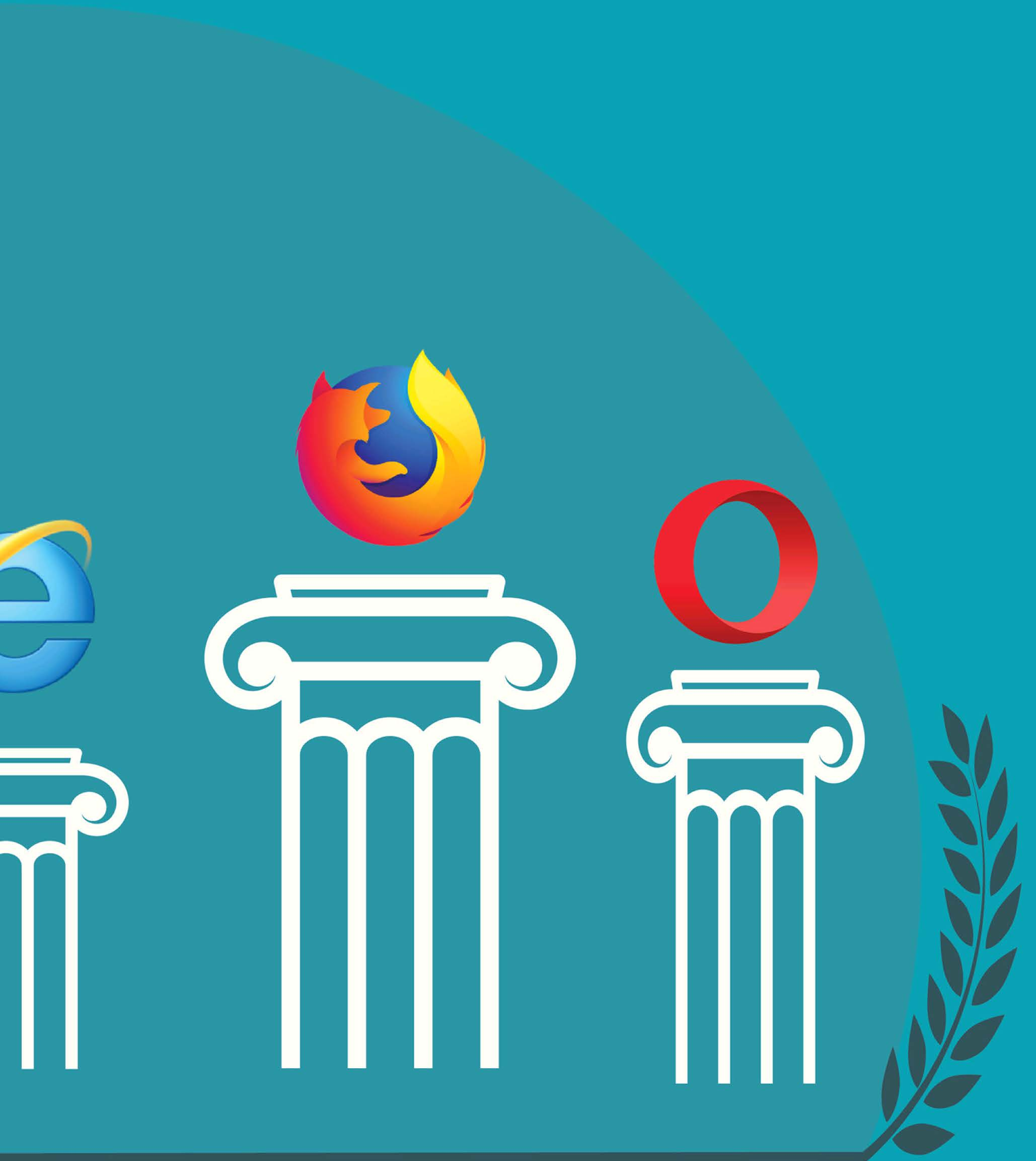
oogle Chrome

FIREFOX

Firefox has been a mainstay in the app development world and, over the years, has been praised for its open-source ethos. The software can load documents and webpages fast, and it doesn't require as much RAM storage as Chrome on macOS devices, which is good news. It's also possible to organize tabs into collections to clearly define work and personal content, and it automatically blocks ad trackers by default, so you don't need to rely on third-party software. Where some web browsers have put their core focus on speed and performance, Firefox has made privacy and net neutrality its mainstay, and it's working well.

Like with other browsers, there are some drawbacks worth noting. One of the biggest is that switching between tabs can sometimes feel slow, and updates don't always work in the way you want them to. Unlike Chrome, you need to close the app and wait for the software to update, which can be frustrating when you need to browse quickly. On some websites, CSS animation doesn't load properly on Firefox, which can cause usability issues on older websites, and there are more advertisements on older, riskier websites despite having an in-built ad-blocker, so some third-party tools and plugins might be required on top.



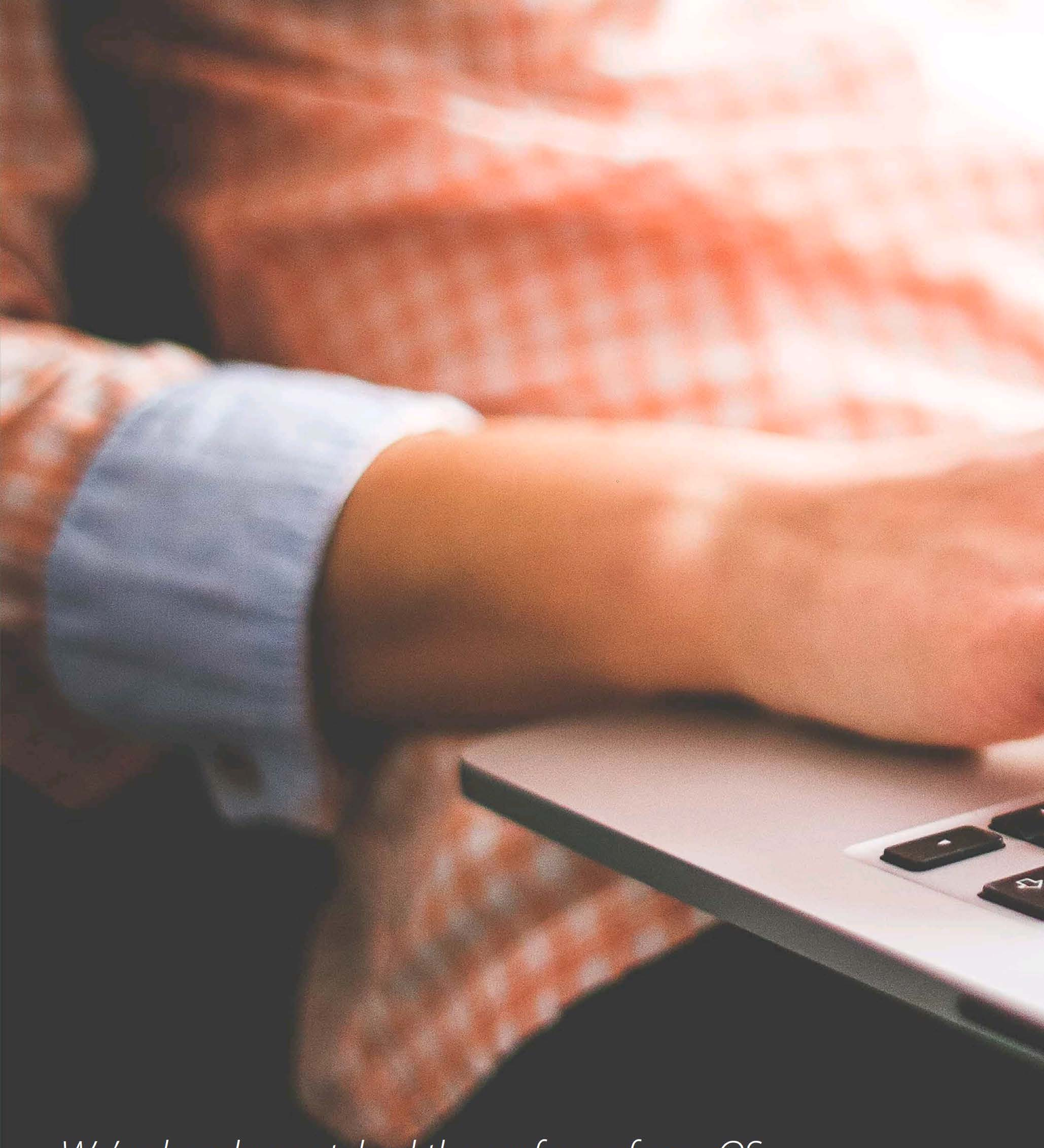


SAFARI

On macOS, it pays to use Safari. Though the software doesn't include all of the features you might know and expect from other browsers, its deep integration into the Apple ecosystem makes it the preferred choice. Start searching on your iPhone and pick up where you left off on your MacBook, and vice versa. It's built-in on all Apple devices, and iCloud Keychain is a blessing, allowing you to save a password on your iPhone and automatically log into your accounts on your Mac using Touch ID. Other popular integrations include iMessage sharing and Apple Pay by default - you'll never have to remember your password again! It's also good to note that **Apple is planning to introduce PassKeys in iOS 16 and macOS Ventura,** designed to replace passwords and make use of on-device biometrics. It's a feature that will no doubt revolutionize the way we log into our accounts and is yet another reason why Privacy remains paramount. Indeed, when you load content on Safari, each page is a separate process, and the company's Intelligent Tracking Prevention will help you identify and block trackers. In recent years, Safari

has developed a fingerprinting defense tool, sharing only basic data with developers and advertisers to ensure you're not profiled. App Tracking Transparency allows you to control the apps that are allowed to track your activity across other websites on iOS and macOS, and the Privacy Report button shows you how your privacy is protected when you're online. HTTPS certificates for sites on Safari must be renewed every year, another important protection. For security, Safari comes out on top.

Despite facing some criticism from consumers in the 2010s, Apple has worked hard to make Safari faster and more efficient than ever before. Indeed, the 2021 Jetstream 2 browser benchmark gave it a score of 136, higher than other popular browsers like Chrome and Firefox, but there are, of course, drawbacks, one being the fact there are limited extensions compared to Chrome, though recent changes on iOS could make extensions more accessible across the board. Moreover, you can only use Safari on Apple devices right now. The company once offered Safari for Windows, but this software was discontinued.



We've barely scratched the surface of macOS browsers (tools like Brave and Opera are growing in popularity), but there's no doubting Safari reigns supreme in the browsing wars.

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BUFFETT'S FIRM BUYS MORE APPLE, AMAZON WHILE BETTING ON OIL

Warren Buffett's company bet more on high-tech darling Apple and e-commerce giant Amazon during the second quarter, while also investing billions in old-school oil producers Occidental Petroleum and Chevron.

Berkshire Hathaway detailed all its second-quarter investments in a new filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Wall Street follows Berkshire's investments closely because of Buffett's remarkably successful track record over the decades.

Berkshire had already disclosed its biggest move in the quarter — investing $1.4 billion in

BUFFETT ~

OX

oil producer Occidental Petroleum — because that investment's size required more immediate updates. Berkshire now owns more than $11 billion worth of Occidental stock, and it controls more than 20% of the company after making several more purchases since the quarter ended on June 30.

But the filing revealed a number of smaller moves Berkshire made during the second quarter, including adding to its stakes in Apple, Amazon, Chevron, Ally Financial, Activision Blizzard and several other stocks. Berkshire also trimmed its holdings in General Motors, US Bancorp and Kroger stocks while eliminating a stake in Verizon Communications.

Although Berkshire was active during the second quarter, it didn't do nearly as much as it did in the first three months of the year when it invested $51 billion in an assortment of stocks.

Berkshire's biggest single investment got a bit bigger during the quarter because it bought nearly 4 million more Apple shares, giving it 894.8 million shares of the iPhone maker.

The famously tech-averse investor's conglomerate also picked up more than 10 million Amazon shares, giving it nearly 10.7 million shares.

The filing doesn't make clear which investments Buffett handled and which ones were made by the two other investment managers at Berkshire, but Buffett typically handles all the larger investments worth more than $1 billion, such as the company's major stakes in Apple, Bank of America, American Express and Coca-Cola stocks. Berkshire officials don't typically comment on these quarterly filings.

Berkshire now owns 68.4 million Activision Blizzard shares after picking up more than 4 million more during the quarter. Buffett has said that investment is a bet that Microsoft's acquisition of the video game maker will go through.

Besides investments, the Omaha, Nebraska-based Berkshire also owns more than 90 companies outright, including Geico insurance, BNSF railroad, several major utilities and an eclectic collection of manufacturing and retail companies, such as Dairy Queen and Precision Castparts.

NEW CLIMATE DEAL SPURS HOPES OF MORE CARBON STORAGE PROJECTS

The rolling prairie lands of northeastern Wyoming have been a paradise of lush, knee-deep grass for sheep, cattle and pronghorn antelope this summer.

But it's a different green — greener energy — that geologist Fred McLaughlin seeks as he drills nearly two miles (3.2 kilometers) into the ground, far deeper than the thick coal seams that make this the top coal-mining region in the United States. McLaughlin and his University of Wyoming colleagues are studying whether tiny spaces in rock deep underground can permanently store vast volumes of greenhouse gas emitted by a coal-fired power plant.

PLASTIC PIPETES
CALIPER
TOP

This is the concept known as carbon storage, long touted as an answer to global warming that preserves the energy industry's burning of fossil fuels to generate electricity.

So far, removing carbon dioxide from power plant smokestacks and pumping it underground hasn't been feasible without higher electricity bills to cover the technique's huge costs. But with a $2.5 billion infusion from Congress last year and now bigger tax incentives through the Inflation Reduction Act passed by Congress, researchers and industry continue to try.

One goal of McLaughlin's project is to preserve the lifespan of a relatively new coal-fired power plant, Dry Fork Station, run by Basin Electric Power Cooperative. State officials hope it will do the same for the whole beleaguered coal industry that still underpins Wyoming's economy. The state produces about 40% of the nation's coal but declining production and a series of layoffs and bankruptcies have beset the Gillette area's vast, open-pit coal mines over the past decade.

While the economics of carbon storage remain uncertain at best, McLaughlin and others are confident in the technology.

"The geology exists," McLaughlin said. "It is a resource we're looking for — and the resource is pore space."

HOW IT WORKS

By pore space, McLaughlin doesn't mean skin care but microscopic spaces between grains of sandstone deep underground. Countless such spaces add up: Enough, he hopes, to hold 55 million tons (50 million metric tons) of carbon dioxide over 30 years.

McLaughlin and his team used the same drill rigs as the oil industry to bore their two wells almost 10,000 feet (3,000 meters), taking core samples from nine geological formations in the process. The researchers will study how injection at one well, using saltwater as a stand-in for liquid carbon dioxide, could affect fluid behavior at the other.

"It's basically like a call and response, if you want to think of it that way," McLaughlin said. "We can ground truth our simulations."

McLaughlin's team also does a lot of lab work on carbon sequestration back at the University of Wyoming School of Energy Resources in Laramie, studying on a microscopic scale how much carbon dioxide different sandstone layers can hold. They model on computers how much carbon dioxide, well by well, could be pumped underground north of Gillette.

Eventually they want to advance to carbon dioxide captured from the smoke plume at nearby Dry Fork Station, using a technique developed by California-based Membrane Technology and Research, Inc.

WYOMING'S CARBON DREAMS

With an eye toward carbon storage, Wyoming in 2020 became one of just two states, along with North Dakota, to take over from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency primary authority to issue the kind of permit McLaughlin and his team will need to pump large volumes of carbon dioxide, pressurized into a high density "supercritical" state, underground.

ATLAS
PRESSURE CONTROL

Center for Economic Geology Research

Core Lab
RESERVOIR OPTIMIZATION
Carl
UW
Can
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Besides the permit, the geologists will also need more funding. The U.S. Department of Energy Carbon Storage Assurance Facility Enterprise (CarbonSAFE) program is funding 24 carbon capture and storage projects nationwide, and this is one of the furthest along.

Such projects were likely already eligible for some of the roughly $2.5 billion in last year's infrastructure bill. Now the new Inflation Reduction Act will boost the "45Q" tax credit for electricity producers who sequester their carbon from $50 to $85 per ton.

Pumping carbon dioxide underground is nothing new. For decades, the oil and gas industry has used carbon dioxide, after it's separated from the methane sold for fueling stoves and furnaces, to recharge aging oil fields.

UNTIL NOW, FAILED EXPERIMENTS

Critics, however, point out the process is expensive to use at power plants and provides a lifeline of sorts to the coal, oil and natural gas industries when the world, in their view, should stop using fossil fuels altogether.

To date, only one commercially-operational, large-scale project in the U.S. has pumped carbon dioxide from a power plant underground. But to defray costs, NRG Energy's Petra Nova coal-fired power plant outside Houston sold its carbon dioxide to increase local oil production.

After three years in operation, Petra Nova closed in 2020, when low oil prices made using the gas to recharge a nearby oil field unprofitable.

In December, a U.S. Government Accountability Office review found that Petra Nova was the only one of eight carbon capture and storage projects at coal-fired plants to actually go into operation, after getting $684 million in Department of Energy funding since 2009.

Some communities that have dealt for years with industrial air pollution also worry that companies will use promises of carbon storage as a way to expand.

For Massachusetts Institute of Technology research engineer Howard Herzog, a carbon capture and storage pioneer, the question isn't whether the technique is technically feasible at scale. He's certain that it is. But whether it can be economically feasible is a different matter.

"People are starting to take it more seriously even though fundamentally changing our energy systems is not an easy task," Herzog said. "It's not something you do in the short term. You've got to really set the policy in place and we still haven't really done that."

It may be expensive, said Herzog. But doing nothing when it comes to climate, "may be much more expensive."

Wyoming Dry Fork CarbonSAFE III project
Reservoir Heterogeneity Mapping
Property Modeling
Minnelusa
Hulett
Minnelusa Formation

FLORIDA UTILITY'S NEW DRONE CAN SPEED HURRICANE RECOVERY

Florida's primary energy provider is ready to launch a powerful new technology, just ahead of the busiest weeks of the Atlantic hurricane season: a new fixed-wing drone designed fly into tropical storm force winds and speed the restoration of electricity after severe weather.

FPLAir One resembles a small plane and is remotely operated, enabling the utility to capture and deliver images and video of damaged electrical equipment in real time to its command center. It can fly up to 1000 miles (1600 kilometers) at a time — enough to cover the length of Florida twice in the immediate wake of the most damaging storms.

It's a vast improvement on bucket trucks and hand-held drones when it comes to learning what a storm did at the top of a power pole.

"Rather than going out and try to figure out what's going on, we're able to save hours and days on getting the lights on," Florida Power and Light Chairman and CEO Eric Silagy told.

The drone can even be pre-deployed when a major storm hits, skirting around to its wake and following its path across the utility's power grid. That data can then point ground crews exactly where they need to go, he said.

While satellites need sunny days to document damage, drones can fly under the cloud cover. And unlike handhelds, FPLAir One can fly in much rougher weather, remaining airborne for 22 hours without refueling.

The importance of getting airborne visuals as quickly as possible became evident 30 years ago this month when Category 5 Hurricane Andrew destroyed much of the power grid along with thousands of homes across a wide swath of Miami-Dade County. Helicopters couldn't fly until the wind settled, and the extent of the devastation wasn't immediately clear.

Emerging drone technology showed its potential after Hurricane Irma hit Florida in 2017, when FPL was able to restore power to more than two million customers within 24 hours with the help of a small drone, Silagy said.

"We saw firsthand what a difference it made for us being able to put the right people and the right equipment at the right place at the right time," he said.

FPL
EXPERIMENTAL

WHICH EVS QUALIFY FOR NEW US TAX CREDIT? WEBSITES OFFER HELP

UNUM

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As part of the rollout of a huge new climate, tax and healthcare law, the U.S. government is moving forward with its plan to award new tax credits to electric vehicle purchasers.

Several new websites launched Tuesday to help people identify which vehicles qualify for the credits. Based on data submitted to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, at least 31 new 2022 and 2023 models qualify for the tax credit. For starters, they must be made in North America to be eligible.

President Joe Biden signed Democrats' landmark climate change and health care bill into law on Tuesday. It includes a tax credit of up to $7,500 that could be used to defray the cost of purchasing an electric vehicle.

Models included are the 2022 Ford F Series electric pickup, BMW X5, Nissan Leaf, Chevrolet Bolt, Jeep Wrangler plug-in hybrid, and all four Tesla models.

But some models may exceed sticker-price limits in the complex law, and it remains to be seen whether automakers will be able to find minerals or manufacture batteries that can qualify for the credits.

Consumers can go to **https://vpic.nhtsa.dot.gov/decoder/** and key in the 17-digit vehicle identification number of the EV they want to buy to make sure it's made in the U.S., Canada or Mexico. The Treasury Department also released a frequently asked questions page on the new law's provisions.

As of Tuesday, tax credits will no longer be available for vehicles assembled outside of the U.S., Canada or Mexico. But people who signed purchase contracts for EVs before Tuesday could still get the credits. The remaining electric vehicle provisions of the law are effective Jan. 1.

A Treasury official told reporters on a call Tuesday that the plan puts the U.S. 2030 climate goals within reach and will help ensure Americans can afford to buy an electric car.

Passage of the measure set off a scramble by automakers to speed up efforts to find North American-made batteries and battery minerals from the U.S., Canada or Mexico to make sure EVs are eligible for the credit.

While automakers have been announcing U.S. battery factories and trying to secure domestic mineral supplies, a large industry trade association has warned that the vast majority of EVs now on sale in the U.S. wouldn't qualify for the full credit under the Inflation Reduction Act.

"We are working overtime to localize our supply chains and ramp up production," Chris Smith, chief government affairs officer at Ford, said in a statement.

The credits are important because no automaker wants to be in a position of seeing a competitor sell vehicles at a $7,500 price advantage, especially since the credits largely target middle-class buyers.

"The No. 1 obstacle to EV adoption is cost," said Michelle Krebs, executive analyst with Cox Automotive. "So a $7,500 difference is significant on one vehicle compared to another for the part of the market that this is aimed at."

Under the law, an electric vehicle must contain a battery built in North America with minerals mined or recycled on the continent to be eligible for the credit.

KEEP THE WORLD ADVENTUROUS FOREVER.

OF THE UNITED STATES

And those rules become more stringent over time — to the point where, in a few years, it's possible that no EVs would qualify for the tax credit, said the Alliance of Automotive Innovation, a key industry trade group. As of now, the alliance estimates that about 50 of the 72 electric, hydrogen or plug-in hybrid models that are sold in the United States wouldn't meet the requirements.

Under the $740 billion economic package that Biden signed into law, the tax credits would take effect next year. For an EV buyer to qualify for the full credit, 40% of the metals used in a vehicle's battery must come from North America. By 2027, that required threshold would reach 80%.

If the metals requirement isn't met, the automaker and its buyers would be eligible for half the tax credit, $3,750.

A separate rule would require that half the batteries' value must be manufactured or assembled in the North America. If not, the rest of the tax credit would be lost. Those requirements also grow stricter each year, eventually reaching 100% in 2029. Still another rule would require that the EV itself be manufactured in North America, thereby excluding from the tax credit any vehicles made overseas.

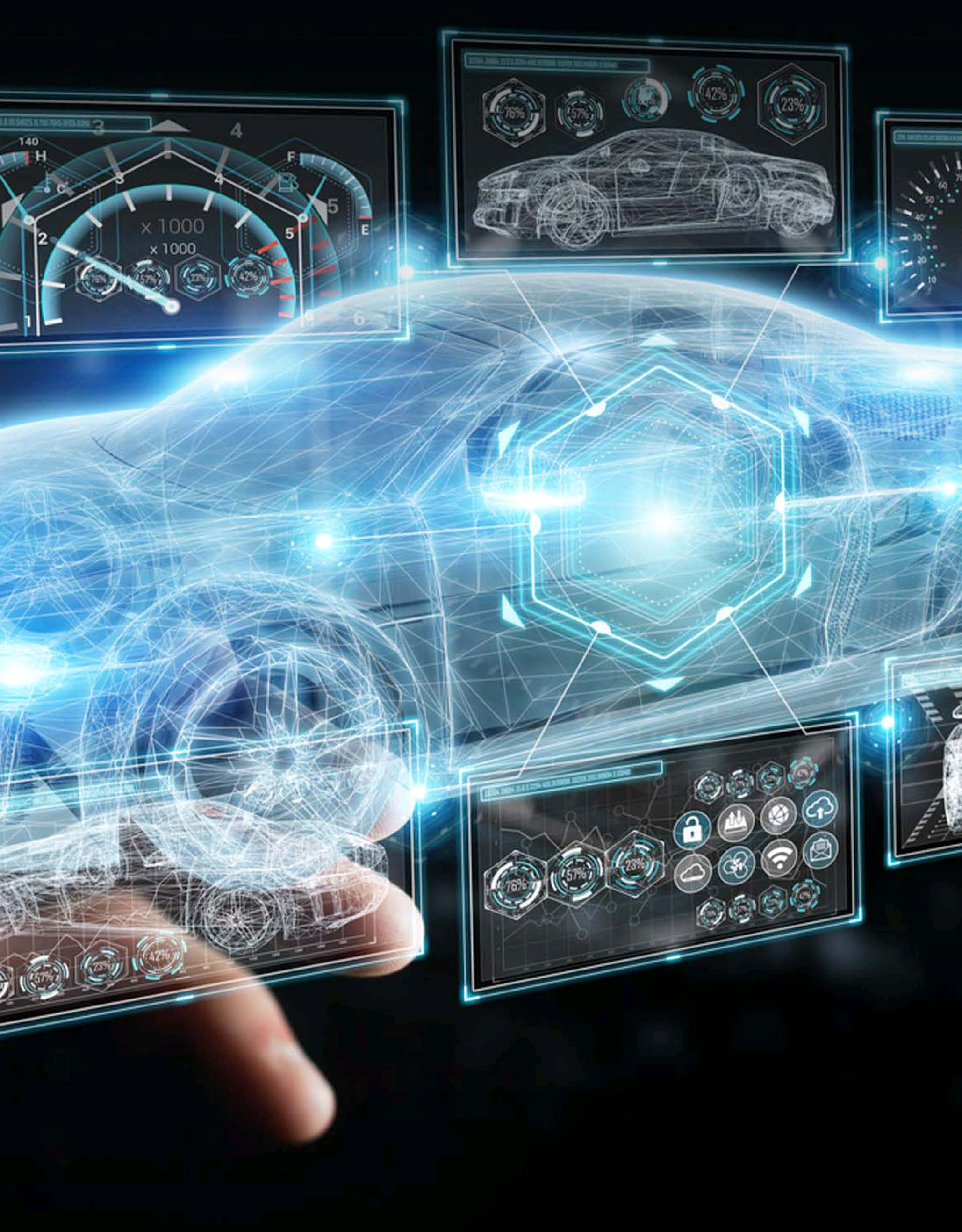
The idea behind the requirement is to incentivize domestic manufacturing and mining, build a robust battery supply chain in North America and lessen the industry's dependence on overseas supply chains that could be subject to disruptions.

But production of lithium and other minerals that are used to produce EV batteries is now dominated by China. And the world's leading producer of cobalt, another component of the EV batteries, is the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The tax credit would be available only to couples with incomes of $300,000 or less or single people with income of $150,000 or less. And any trucks or SUVs with sticker prices above $80,000 or cars above $55,000 wouldn't be eligible, knocking many EVs out of the credits.

There's also a new $4,000 credit for buyers of used EVs, a provision that could help modest-income households go electric.

The Treasury Department, which is administering the tax credits, said more guidance will be coming, and it was not in a position to say what vehicles will qualify for credits after all the law's provisions are considered.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GEORGIA TO USE $240M MORE IN FEDERAL CASH TO BUILD BROADBAND

Gov. Brian Kemp said the state will spend another $240 million in federal COVID-19 relief funds to construct broadband internet to rural locations that don't currently have connections.

Combined with $408 million from an earlier round of COVID-19 aid, plus money from the Federal Communications Commission, nearly $1 billion will be given to utilities and others to try to bring high-speed connections to parts of Georgia that lacked them.

Applications for the new round of grants are open.

The announcement comes as the Republican Kemp vies for reelection with Democratic challenger Stacey Abrams in one of the nation's most high-profile governor's races. Abrams and other Democrats have slammed Kemp for taking credit for handing out federal money even as he voices opposition to federal spending. Abrams pledged to use money from a recent federal infrastructure bill to outdo Kemp in broadband expansion, an issue that has widespread bipartisan support.

In February, when the state awarded the $408 million, officials projected the money would link up 132,000 of the remaining 482,000 homes and businesses that didn't then have a fast connection.

The 49 electric cooperatives, local governments, cable companies and others who got the earlier round of funding committed to spend $330 million of their own money to match the federal cash.

The FCC earlier awarded $326 million to serve nearly 180,000 locations in parts of Georgia using its Rural Digital Opportunity Fund.

Applicants for the new money provide download and upload speeds of 100 megabytes per second. Guidelines call for applicants to consider affordability as part of their plan and says they are "strongly encouraged" to provide a low-cost option. Providers must participate in the FCC's Affordable Connectivity program, which provides a discount of up to $30 a month to qualifying households.

Kemp decided to spend much of Georgia's $4.8 billion in federal relief on broadband expansion, water and sewer improvements and offsetting the negative economic impact of the pandemic.

AMAZON: FTC PROBE HOUNDING BEZOS, EXECS; SUBPOENAS TOO BROAD

Amazon has complained to federal regulators that they are hounding company founder Jeff Bezos and senior executives, making "impossible-to-satisfy demands" in their investigation of Amazon Prime, the popular streaming and shopping service with free delivery and an estimated 200 million members around the globe.

The Federal Trade Commission has been investigating the sign-up and cancellation practices of Amazon Prime starting in March 2021 with the issuance of civil subpoenas, the

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-26p = f T / (x - x) = f T/d; 34p = x T/d; 86p = y
amazon

biggest online retailer and tech giant disclosed in a petition to the agency filed earlier this month.

The petition asks the FTC to cancel, or extend the deadline for answering, subpoenas sent last June to Bezos, Amazon's former CEO, and current CEO Andy Jassy. It says the FTC "has identified no legitimate reason for needing their testimony when it can obtain the same information, and more, from other witnesses and documents."

Jassy took over the top position at Amazon from Bezos, one of the world's richest individuals, in July 2021. Bezos became executive chairman.

The FTC investigation has widened to include at least five other subscription programs, according to Amazon: Audible, Amazon Music, Kindle Unlimited, Subscribe & Save, and an unidentified third-party program not offered by Amazon. The regulators are asking the company to identify the number of consumers who were enrolled in the programs without giving their consent, among other customer information. In June, agency staff sought to serve subpoenas on nearly 20 current and former Amazon employees, at their homes, with dates for them to give testimony in coming weeks, the petition says.

Amazon says in the petition it has worked "diligently and cooperatively" with FTC staff for more than a year to provide information relevant to the probe, offering up some 37,000 pages of documents. It calls the information demanded in the subpoenas "overly broad and burdensome."

Amazon blames the standoff on "unexplained pressure placed on staff to complete the investigation hastily, by an arbitrarily chosen deadline."

amazon
prime

FTC spokespeople didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

With an estimated 150 million U.S. subscribers, Amazon Prime is a key source of revenue, as well as a wealth of customer data, for the Seattle-based company, which runs an e-commerce empire and ventures in cloud computing, personal "smart" tech and beyond. Amazon Prime costs $139 a year. The service added a coveted feature this year by obtaining exclusive video rights to the NFL's "Thursday Night Football."

Last year, Amazon asked unsuccessfully that FTC Chair Lina Khan step aside from separate antitrust investigations into its business, contending that her public criticism of the company's market power before she joined the government makes it impossible for her to be impartial. Khan was a fierce critic of tech giants Facebook (now Meta), Google and Apple, as well as Amazon. She arrived on the antitrust scene in 2017, writing an influential study titled "Amazon's Antitrust Paradox" when she was a Yale law student.

Amazon's latest petition to the FTC was first reported by Business Insider.

Image: Dado Ruvic

U.S. MIDTERMS BRING FEW CHANGES FROM SOCIAL MEDIA COMPANIES

Social media companies are offering few specifics as they share their plans for safeguarding the U.S. midterm elections.

Platforms like Facebook and Twitter are generally staying the course from the 2020 voting season, which was marred by conspiracies and culminated in the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

Video app TikTok, which has soared in popularity since the last election cycle while also cementing its place as a problem spot for misinformation, announced Wednesday it is launching an election center that will help people find voting locations and candidate information.

The center will show up on videos about U.S. elections and in the feeds of users who search election-related hashtags. TikTok is also partnering with voting advocacy groups to provide specialized voting information for college students, people who are deaf, military members living overseas and those with past criminal convictions.

TikTok, like other platforms, would not provide details on the number of full-time employees or how much money it is dedicating to U.S. midterm efforts, which aim to push accurate voting information and counter misinformation.

The company said it is working with over a dozen fact-checking organizations, including U.S.-based PolitiFact and Lead Stories, on debunking misinformation. TikTok declined to say how many videos have been fact-checked on its site. The company will use a combination of humans and artificial intelligence to detect and remove threats against election workers as well as voting misinformation.

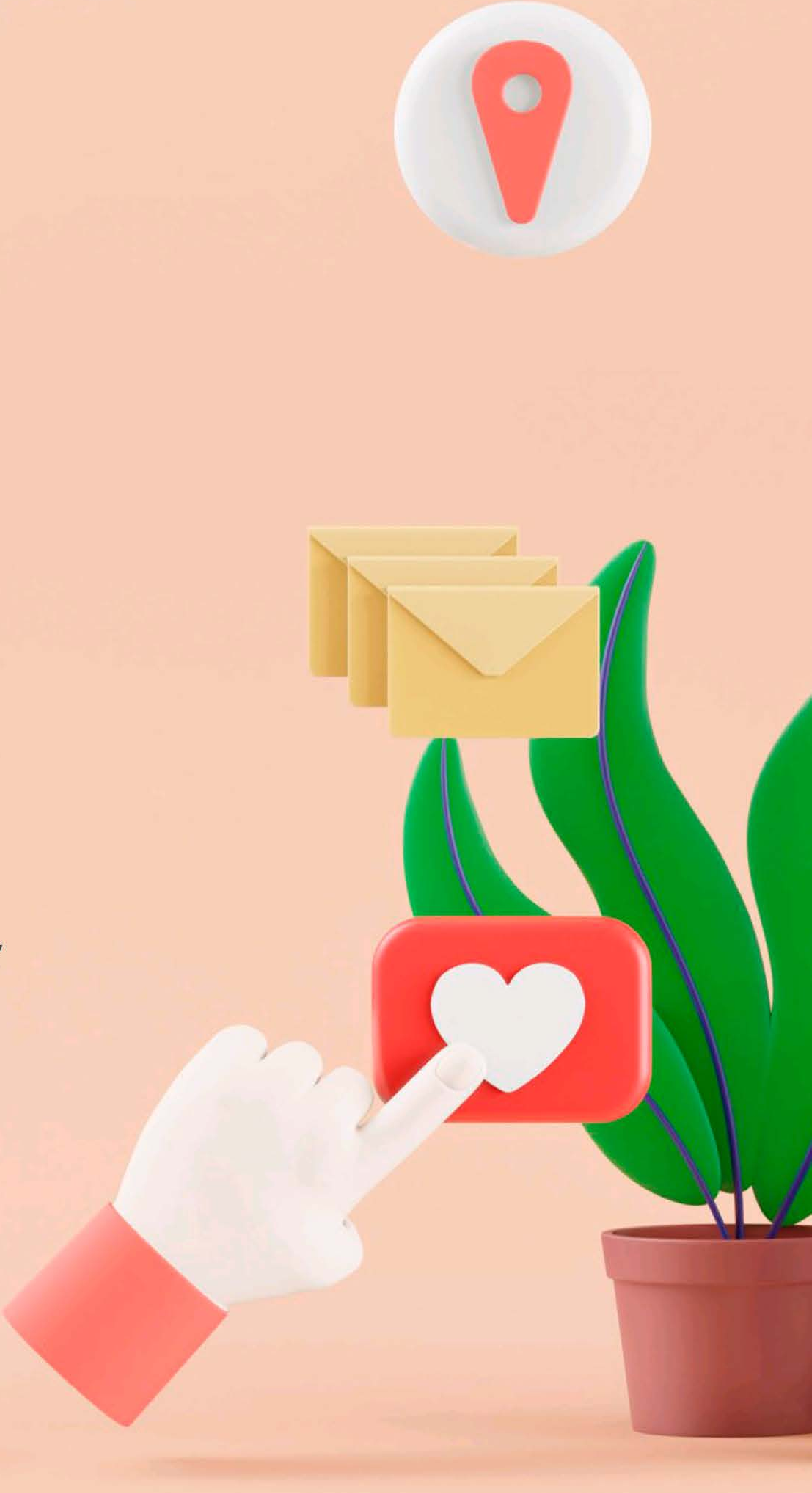
TikTok said it's also also watching for influencers who break its rules by accepting money off platform to promote political issues or candidates, a problem that came to light during the 2020 election, said TikTok's head of safety Eric Han. The company is trying to educate creators and agencies about its rules, which include bans on political advertising.

"With the work we do, there is no finish line," Han said.

Meta Platforms Inc., which owns Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, announced that its approach to this election cycle is "largely consistent with the policies and safeguards" from 2020.

"As we did in 2020, we have a dedicated team in place to combat election and voter interference while also helping people get reliable information about when and how to vote," Nick Clegg, Meta's president of global affairs, wrote in a blog post.

Meta declined to say how many people it has dedicated to its election team responsible for monitoring the midterms, only that it has "hundreds of people across more than 40 teams."



As in 2020, Clegg wrote, the company will remove misinformation about election dates, voting locations, voter registration and election outcomes. For the first time, Meta said it will also show U.S. election-related notifications in languages other than English.

Meta also said it will reduce how often it uses labels on election-related posts directing people toward reliable information. The company said its users found the labels overused. Some critics have also said the labels were often too generic and repetitive.

Compared with previous years, though, Meta's public communication about its response to election misinformation has gone decidedly quiet.

Image: Eric Cox

Image: Dado Ruvic

Between 2018 and 2020, the company released more than 30 statements that laid out specifics about how it would stifle U.S. election misinformation, prevent foreign adversaries from running ads or posts around the vote and subdue divisive hate speech. Until Tuesday's blog post, Meta had only released a one-page document outlining plans for the fall elections, even as potential threats to the vote persist.

Twitter, meanwhile, is sticking with its own misinformation labels, though it has redesigned them since 2020 based in part on user feedback. The company activated its "civic integrity policy" last week, which means tweets containing harmful misinformation about the election are labeled with links to credible information. The tweets themselves won't be promoted or amplified by the platform.

The company, which like TikTok does not allow political advertisements, is focusing on putting verified, reliable information before its users. That can include links to state-specific hubs for local election information as well as nonpartisan public service announcements for voters.

MUSK TWEET JOKING ABOUT BUYING MANCHESTER UNITED CAUSES STIR

Elon Musk caused a stir by tweeting that he was buying the English soccer team Manchester United — whose current owners are opposed by many fans — then saying several hours later that it was a joke.

It comes as the billionaire Tesla CEO faces a legal battle in the U.S. after backing out of a deal to buy Twitter for $44 billion. He is a prolific user of the platform, often musing about social issues or joking with his 103 million followers and occasionally getting into trouble with U.S. regulators.

Early Wednesday, Musk sent a tweet about his political affiliations and then added in a second tweet: "Also, I'm buying Manchester United ur welcome."

That came as shocking news in the Manchester United world — albeit welcome to many — after nearly a decade of sub-par performances.

Asked by a follower whether he was serious, Musk later tweeted, "No, this is a long-running joke on Twitter. I'm not buying any sports teams."

It wasn't Musk's first joke about buying a popular franchise. In April, he tweeted, "Next I'm buying Coca-Cola to put the cocaine back in." He noted in the thread about Manchester United that the Coca-Cola tweet had also been in jest.

Musk previously ran afoul of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission for tweets claiming that he had the funding to take Tesla private in 2018, leading the electric vehicle maker's stock price to jump. That led to a securities fraud settlement requiring his tweets be approved by a Tesla attorney before being published.

He's now facing more legal woes over the deal to buy Twitter that he negotiated in April. Musk sold roughly $8.5 billion worth of Tesla shares to help fund the purchase and lined up a diverse group of other investors to back him.

The deal fell apart last month after Musk said Twitter refused to provide him enough information about the number of fake accounts on the platform. Twitter could have tried to make him pay a $1 billion breakup fee that he agreed to but instead is suing to force him to complete the purchase. The case is set to go to trial in Delaware in October.

Musk, with his seemingly unlimited potential to buy the best soccer players in the world, would have been a welcome prospect for many Man United fans who want to see the club back at the top of the game.

Man United was arguably the biggest team in world soccer under manager Alex Ferguson, winning 13 Premier League titles and two Champions League trophies. But since Ferguson's retirement in 2013, the team has struggled to win trophies.

Last season, United finished 35 points behind champion Manchester City — the club's local rival — and there were protests against the Glazer family, the team's American owners.

Many supporters in the club's huge international fanbase have opposed the Glazers since they took control in 2005, in part because they financed the takeover by putting the club in debt for the first time in decades.

The latest low came Saturday (13) when United lost 4-0 to Brentford, a small team from west

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London that was promoted to the Premier League in 2021. It was United's second straight loss to open the season, leaving it in last place in the 20-team Premier League.

The Manchester United Supporters' Trust fan group, known as MUST, condemned the owners following last weekend's match.

"What we have witnessed tonight is an embarrassment — no, a humiliation — for Manchester United fans. And yet in many ways it was not a surprise. It feels like the culmination of a long-term direction of travel," the fan club said in a statement. "MUST hold the owners of the Club primarily responsible for this new low in our decade of decline."

BEST BUY TRIMS JOBS AFTER IT CUTS SALES AND PROFIT OUTLOOK

Best Buy, the nation’s largest consumer electronics chain, is trimming jobs in an effort to adjust to new changes in consumer behavior as the virus wanes.

Best Buy declined to say how many jobs it was cutting, but The Wall Street Journal, which was first to report the news, estimated it involved hundreds of jobs at the store level.

“We’re always evaluating and evolving our teams to make sure we’re serving our customers,” Best Buy said in a statement emailed to The Associated Press. ‘With an ever-changing macroeconomic environment, including customers shopping more digitally

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BEST BUY
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Curbside Pickup

Shop safely
Face coverings are
required in our store.

than ever, we have made adjustments to our teams that include eliminating a small number of roles."

The job cuts come after Best Buy reduced its annual sales and profit forecast late last month, citing surging inflation that has dampened consumer spending on gadgets. The Minneapolis-based company echoed Walmart, which a few days before cut its profit outlook. The nation's largest retailer said that higher prices on basic necessities are forcing shoppers to cut back on discretionary items.

Walmart also announced earlier this month that it was cutting jobs at its corporate headquarters as part of a restructuring effort.

Still, the latest snapshot on the overall U.S. job market remains strong even as inflation continues to rage and affect all types of businesses.
Last week, the government reported that unemployment dropped another notch, from 3.6% to 3.5%, matching the more than 50-year low reached just before the pandemic took hold. The economy has now gained back all 22 million jobs lost in March and April 2020 when COVID-19 hit the U.S.

Best Buy said last month it now expects this year's sales at stores opened at least a year to be down 11%, much steeper than the 3% to 6% drop it originally forecast in May.

For Best Buy's fiscal second quarter, it expects comparable sales to be down 13%. Still, revenue for the quarter should be roughly 7.5% higher than the second quarter of 2020, it said.

Best Buy is slated to report its quarterly results on Aug. 30.

AIRBNB IS ROLLING OUT NEW SCREENING TOOLS TO STOP PARTIES

airbnb

Airbnb says it will use new methods to spot and block people who try to use the short-term rental service to throw a party.

The company said it has introduced technology that examines the would-be renter's history on Airbnb, how far they live from the home they want to rent, whether they're renting for a weekday or weekend, and other factors.

Airbnb said the screening system that it is rolling out for listings in the United States and Canada has been tested since last October in parts of Australia, where it produced a 35% drop in unauthorized parties.

The San Francisco-based company said the technology is designed to prevent a customer's request for reservation from ever reaching the host of the property involved. Airbnb said people blocked from renting an entire home might be able to book a single room because the host is more likely to be around.

Airbnb has been under growing pressure to clamp down on parties since 2019, when a Halloween house party in a San Francisco suburb ended with five people dead in a shooting.

The following year, Airbnb announced a worldwide party ban at its listings and banned people under 25 from renting an entire house near their home unless they had a record of positive reviews on the site. The party ban was initially cast as a temporary health measure during the pandemic but was made permanent in June.

NASA'S MOON ROCKET MOVED TO LAUNCH PAD FOR 1ST TEST FLIGHT

ARTEMIS

WE ARE GOING!

NASA's new moon rocket arrived at the launch pad ahead of its debut flight in less than two weeks.

The 322-foot (98-meter) rocket emerged from its mammoth hangar late Tuesday night, drawing crowds of Kennedy Space Center workers. It took nearly 10 hours for the rocket to make the four-mile trip to the pad, pulling up at sunrise.

NASA is aiming for an Aug. 29 liftoff for the lunar test flight. No one will be inside the crew capsule atop the rocket, just three mannequins — test dummies swarming with sensors to measure radiation and vibration.

The capsule will fly around the moon in a distant orbit for a couple weeks, before heading back for a splashdown in the Pacific. The entire flight should last six weeks.

The flight is the first moonshot in NASA's Artemis program. The space agency is aiming for a lunar-orbiting flight with astronauts in two years and a lunar landing by a human crew as early as 2025. That's much later than NASA anticipated when it established the program more than a decade ago, as the space shuttle fleet retired. The years of delays have added billions of dollars to the cost.

NASA's new SLS moon rocket, short for Space Launch System, is 41 feet (12 meters) shorter than the Saturn V rockets used during Apollo a half-century ago. But it's more powerful, using a core stage and twin strap-on boosters, similar to the ones used for the space shuttles.

"When you look at the rocket, it almost looks retro. It looks like we're looking back toward the Saturn V," NASA Administrator Bill Nelson

said this month. “But it’s a totally different, new, highly sophisticated, more sophisticated rocket and spacecraft.”

Twenty-four astronauts flew to the moon during Apollo, with 12 of them landing on it from 1969 through 1972. The space agency wants a more diverse team and more sustained effort under Artemis, named after Apollo’s mythological twin sister.

“I want to underscore that this is a test flight,” Nelson said. “It’s just the beginning.”

This was the rocket’s third trip to the pad. A countdown test in April was marred by fuel leaks and other equipment trouble, forcing NASA to return the rocket to the hangar for repairs. The dress rehearsal was repeated at the pad in June, with improved results.

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JAMIE FOXX HUNTS VAMPIRES IN COMEDY 'DAY SHIFT'

This year marks the centennial anniversary of F. W. Murnau's "Nosferatu," a long time for us humans but only a blip for vampires.

If you were looking to celebrate the birthday of that silent classic, which still casts a long and ominous shadow over all vampires films that have followed, you could do it with what's perhaps its exact opposite: the new Netflix action-comedy "Day Shift," with Jamie Foxx as a San Fernando Valley vampire hunter.

"Day Shift," which begins streaming Friday, has aims much closer to something like "Zombieland" than Murnau. Foxx plays Bud Jablonski, a working-class Los Angeles man

Day Shift | Geeked Week Inside Look

and divorced father who cleans pools as a cover for his real job of hunting vampires. They seem to be especially populous in the San Fernando Valley, which may not be surprising to Californians but is about as far a departure you can get from the aristocratic, European origins of the genre. Plus, "What We Do in the Shadows" already has Staten Island covered.

"Day Shift" isn't much interested in vampires, anyway. They're mostly videogame-like cannon fodder for Bud, a veteran hunter who's quite good at killing them but significantly worse at hiding his real occupation. He's living on his own after his wife (Meagan Good), suspicious of his excuses, kicked him out. Now, she's ready to move, with their 10-year-old daughter (Zion Broadnax), far away from Los Angeles unless Bud can come up with $10,000 in a week for school tuition and braces.

But Bud is living fang to fang. He gets his money selling vampire teeth to what's effectively a pawn shop. He drives a turquoise pick-up and lives, with locks up and down the door, in a seedy apartment complex that appalls his ex. She hears a porn star has just moved in. "They live amongst us," Bud explains.

"Day Shift," the directorial debut of former stuntman J.J. Perry and written by Tyler Tice and "Army of the Dead" scribe Shay Hatten, has placed a familiar tale — a down-and-out single father trying to prove his worth — into a vampire movie. There's also a labor commentary somewhere in here with Bud, kicked out of the vampire hunter union, trying to get back in to secure higher rates for his kills.

Day Shift | Jamie Foxx, Dave Franco, and Snoop Dogg | Official Trailer

But the union subplot is less to drive home a free-market point than to supply Bud a buddy-comedy partner. After another hunter, Big John (Snoop Dogg), helps Bud get back into the union, a union rep (Dave Franco) is assigned to monitor and ride along with Bud. As a suit-wearing, regulations sidekick terrified of vampires but thoroughly knowledgeable about them, Franco is a fine foil to Foxx.

There's a this-is-barely-a-story feel to "Day Shift," but not always unpleasantly so. The family plotline is as basic as it gets. The buddy comedy set-up — complete with banter about the "Twilight" saga — is likewise standard boilerplate. "Day Shift" might slot in somewhere around an OK "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" episode.

Yet the slapdash vibe of "Day Shift" has its charms. It's built almost perfectly to be the kind of thing you might, after some scrolling, absentmindedly click to watch on Netflix and end of watching for its sheer watchability. That's due largely to Foxx, whose comic timing remains sharp, and supporting players like Snoop and Peter Stormare who breeze in, as if purely for fun. Thinly sketched as it is, "Day Shift" has a retro vibe. Not, like, "Nosferatu"-retro, but more 1980s. Want to see Jamie Foxx shoot some vampires? Well, you're in luck.

"Day Shift" a Focus Features release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for strong violence and gore, and language. Running time: 114 minutes. Two and half stars out of four.

AMAZON'S RING, MGM TO LAUNCH SHOW FROM VIRAL DOORBELL VIDEOS

Two Amazon-owned companies — Ring and Hollywood studio MGM — are teaming to create a TV show in the mold of "America's Funniest Home Videos" using viral footage from Ring's doorbell and smart-home cameras.

The half-hour show, called "Ring Nation," will be hosted by actor and comedian Wanda Sykes and premier in syndication on Sept. 26, MGM said.

The studio noted audiences should expect to see the usual things that go viral — marriage proposals, neighbors saving neighbors and silly animals.

Image: Jessica Hill

The series showcases Amazon’s fusion of its various business arms, this time to highlight what MGM called “interesting moments from communities across the country.”

“You have one company that owns two juggernauts and (has) just figured out how to leverage one against the other,” said Robert Passikoff, president of the brand research firm Brand Keys. He noted that unlike scripted movies or shows, a reality series using Ring footage will likely be cheaper to produce.

The show also presents a branding opportunity for the Seattle-based e-commerce and retail giant, which bought Ring in 2018 for $1 billion and has dealt with rounds of privacy concerns around Ring and its relationship with police departments across the country.

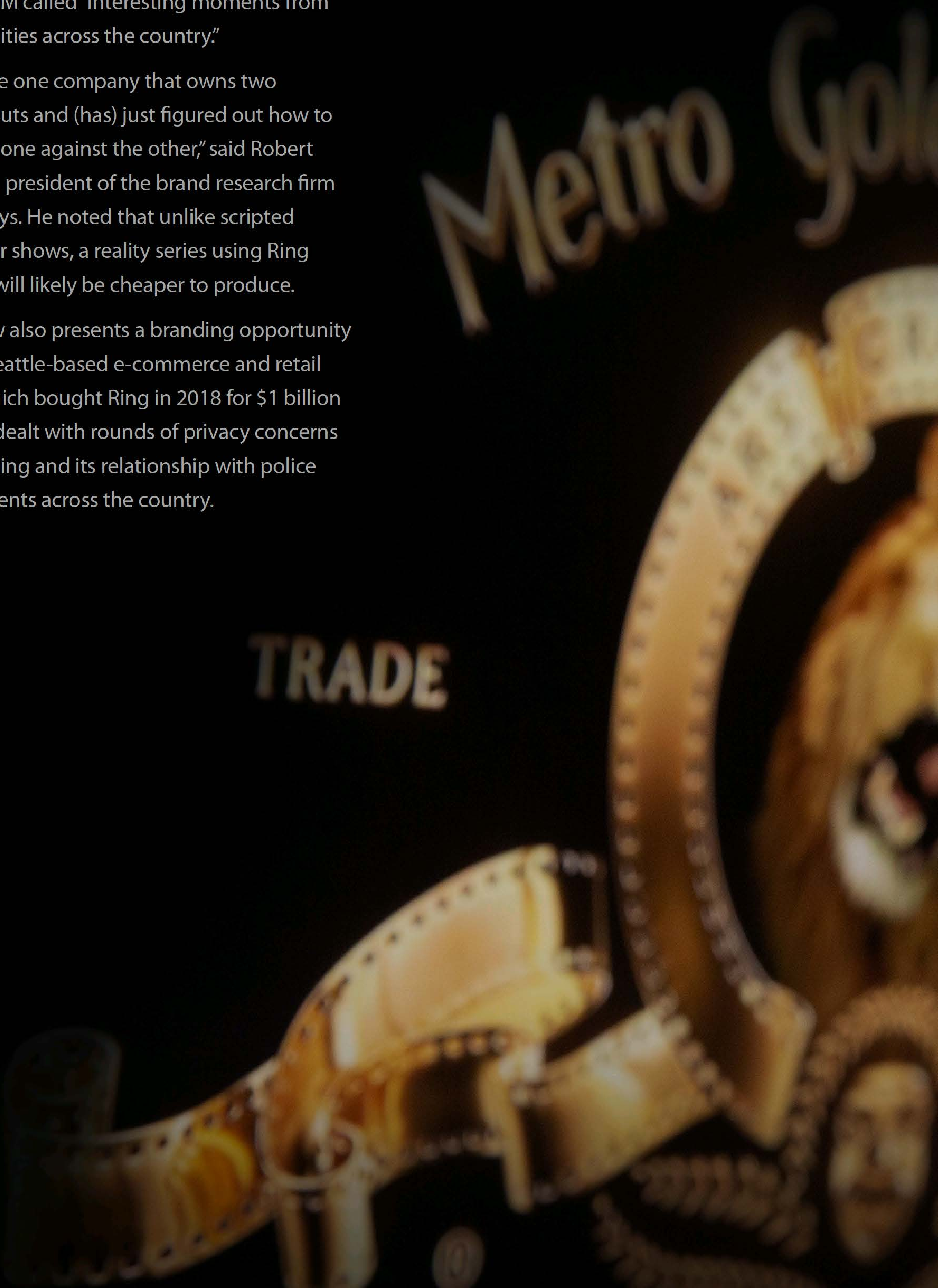

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Image: Dado Ruvic

ring

Last month, Amazon revealed it had provided Ring doorbell footage to law enforcement 11 times this year without the user's permission — all in response to emergency requests, according to the company.

MGM, which Amazon purchased for $8.5 billion, said in a statement that "Ring Nation" will offer audiences "daily dose of life's unpredictable, heartwarming and hilarious viral videos" shared by people from their cameras.

"Many of these have been previously shared online," Amazon spokesperson Nick Schweers said. "Others were sent directly to the team." Ring Nation secures permissions for each video from the owner and anyone identifiable in the video, or from companies that hold the rights to the clips, he said.

Amazon's deal to purchase MGM was closed earlier this year, though the Federal Trade Commission has said it still retains discretion to challenge it. Big Fish Entertainment, a production company owned by MGM, will also be part of the partnership.

WALMART DEAL WITH PARAMOUNT GIVES MEMBERS STREAMING PERKS

Walmart Inc. said it has signed a deal with Paramount Global to offer the entertainment company's streaming service as a perk to subscribers of the discounter's shipping subscription service.

The move is part of efforts by the nation's largest retailer to better compete with Amazon's Prime membership program, which offers an array of perks.

Starting in September, subscribers to Walmart+ will be have access to the Paramount+ Essential

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Plan, which includes ads and offers original dramas such as "1883" and "Star Trek: Strange New Worlds," along with the preschool franchise "PAW Patrol," recent blockbuster films such as "Sonic the Hedgehog 2," and live sports.

The cost of Walmart+ will remain $98 a year, or $12.95 a month, the retailer said. It includes free shipping on items and discounts on gasoline. An Amazon Prime membership costs $139 a year, or $14.99 a month, and includes the Amazon Video service, original programming and free gaming, among other perks.

Walmart, which is based in Bentonville, Arkansas, has never disclosed the number of members it has signed up but said that it has had monthly growth in membership since its launch in September 2020.

Terms of the deal with New York-based Paramount Global were not disclosed.

TIPS TO TAKE THE STING OUT OF 50% HIGHER CAR RENTAL PRICES

When making your travel budget, don't assume that lodging and airfare will be your biggest expense. Now, more than ever, rental cars are shaping up to be one of the biggest — and stubbornly high — aspects of people's vacation budgets.

While airfare and lodging prices are certainly near all-time highs, rental cars are among the biggest price increases of all travel expenses. When comparing prices for July 2022 versus July 2019 (the last normal summer pre-pandemic), hotel prices are up 7% , according to the latest set of Consumer Price Index data released in August 2022. Airfares are up 16%. But rental cars are up a whopping 48%.

90
92
94
96
98
drive?

WHEN DID RENTAL CAR PRICES GET SO HIGH?

Like most travel costs, rental car prices sharply dropped in April and May 2020 as people began calling off vacations to stay at home. But things began to turn around at the beginning of 2021 when prices began increasing every month, building up to a record high set in July 2021.

Road trips were especially hot that summer (thus high demand), but other factors — including a global semiconductor shortage and tourism industry labor shortages — contributed to low supply. In fact, leisure and hospitality sector employment remains 7.8% below pre-pandemic levels, according to an analysis of Bureau of Labor Statistics data from the U.S. Travel Association.

Prices have slightly dipped from the July 2021 record, but they are still far above pre-pandemic pricing.

HOW TO FIND AFFORDABLE RENTAL CARS

NerdWallet conducted an analysis of 360 rental car reservations to better understand the cheapest ways to rent. Some of the findings may help you save on your next rental car.

Among the rental car companies in the analysis, Enterprise is usually the cheapest, while National is most expensive. The analysis also found that last-minute rentals are typically cheaper than those booked months in advance. And you'll almost always save by booking at an off-site rental car location versus at the airport.

That knowledge can help you better understand the cheapest places to book, but sometimes booking from a specific location or company might be non-negotiable with the nature of your trip. These other tricks can still help you save:

— USE TRAVEL CREDIT CARDS: Some travel credit cards offer rental car insurance as part of their benefits, though it may exclude certain types of expensive cars or rentals in some countries. When it is applicable though, it can save you money on the extra insurance you might have otherwise signed up for at the counter.

— JOIN RENTAL CAR LOYALTY PROGRAMS: Benefits vary based on your level of elite status, though some levels can include free upgrades and waived fees. You might even get automatic status through a credit card. Yet even the entry-level, free-to-join tiers can include perks like priority lines.

— RESERVE NOW AND PAY AT THE COUNTER: Many rental car companies give you the option to pay at the counter. Paying upon pickup has two major benefits versus paying upfront: First, should you need to cancel your trip, you remove the headache of trying to get a refund since you won't have put down any money anyway. Second, if rates drop, you can always cancel and rebook at a lower rate.

HOW TO SAVE MONEY ON ROAD TRIPS

Throw in high gas prices, and road trips might be one of the most expensive ways to travel these days. Here are some ways to cut back on costs.

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— USE APPS TO FIND CHEAP GAS: Apps like GasBuddy track local gas prices and can help you find the cheapest gas stations along your route.

— CONSIDER AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE: With an electric car, you'll avoid paying for gas entirely. While you may still have to pay to charge it, some hotels offer free electric vehicle charging as a guest benefit.

— PLAN A BUDGET-FRIENDLY ROUTE: If you're open-minded to location, consider driving through states with lower gas prices. During the last week of July, the three states with the lowest gas prices were Georgia, South Carolina and Texas, according to AAA data.

WHY TRIP PLANNING SHOULD START WITH RENTAL CAR PRICES

Before you get too caught up in the excitement of a road trip, make sure you can afford it. With prices so much higher than they were two years ago, you don't want to get caught off guard. Hold off on booking your flights or hotels until you've compared rental car prices and included it in your trip budget.

METHODOLOGY

Analysis of 360 rental car prices (including taxes and fees) to better understand rental car pricing trends. The analysis looked at the price of a weeklong rental across eight major rental car companies based on the company's lowest-priced available car (typically a small sedan). Data was gathered for 20 regions, and it covered both the cost to rent from an airport location versus the same company's nearby downtown counterparts.

SOUTH KOREA TO PARDON SAMSUNG'S LEE, OTHER CORPORATE GIANTS

Samsung's de-facto leader secured a pardon of his conviction for bribing a former president in a corruption scandal that toppled a previous South Korean government, an act of leniency that underscored the tech company's huge influence in the nation.

Lee Jae-yong's pardon is partially symbolic since he was released on parole a year ago after serving 18 months of a prison term that would have ended in July, and critics say the billionaire has remained in control of Samsung even while behind bars. Still, the pardon will allow the heir to the electronics juggernaut to fully resume his management duties and could make it easier for the company to pursue investments and mergers.

The Justice Ministry said President Yoon Suk Yeol, who as a prosecutor investigated the corruption scandal involving Lee issued the pardon including other top business leaders.

Lee, 54, was convicted in 2017 of bribing former President Park Geun-hye and her close confidante to win government support for a merger between two Samsung affiliates that tightened Lee's control over the corporate empire. Park and the confidante were also convicted in the scandal, which enraged South Koreans, who staged massive protests for months demanding an end to the shady ties between business and politics. The demonstrations eventually led to Park's ouster from office.

While some civic groups criticized the decision, recent opinion polls have indicated South Koreans — years removed from the protests in 2016 and 2017 — largely favored granting Lee a pardon. That reflects the continuing hold

Samsung has in a country where it makes not just smartphones and TVs but also issues credit cards, builds luxury apartment buildings and runs the country's most sought-after hospital.

Business leaders and politicians had also called for Lee's pardon, which they said would allow Samsung, one of the world's largest makers of computer memory chips and smartphones, to be bolder and quicker in business decisions by fully reinstating his rights to run the business empire.

Justice Minister Han Dong-hoon said the pardons of the business tycoons were aimed at "overcoming the economic crisis through encouraging business activity" at a time when South Koreans are grappling with rising prices, high personal debt and a faltering job market.

Lee's detractors say he already fully resumed his management duties once out on parole — even though South Korea's law bans people convicted of major financial crimes from returning to work for five years following the end of their sentences. Former Justice Minister Park Beom-kye defended Lee's involvement in Samsung's management, insisting that his activities weren't in violation of the ban because the billionaire wasn't receiving wages from Samsung.

In a statement released through Samsung, Lee said he was grateful for "receiving an opportunity to start anew."

"I want to express my apologies for causing concerns for many people because of my shortcomings. I will work even harder to fulfill my responsibilities and duties as a businessperson," Lee said.

SBS

Lee still faces a separate trial on charges of stock price manipulation and auditing violations related to the 2015 merger.

Among others set to be pardoned is Lotte Group Chairman Shin Dong-bin, who received a suspended prison term in 2018 on similar charges of bribing Park, whom then-President Moon Jae-in pardoned in December. Chang Sae-joo, chairman of Dongkuk Steel Mill, and former STX Group Chairman Kang Duk-soo will also receive clemency.

A coalition of civic groups, including People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy, issued a statement criticizing the move to pardon the business leaders, accusing Yoon of cozying up to "chaebol," referring to the family-owned conglomerates that dominate the country's economy.

"President Yoon Suk Yeol's sell-out (to business) sends a signal to chaebol chiefs that they are free to commit all the crimes they want," the groups said, accusing Yoon of damaging the rule of law.

Former President Park was convicted of a broad range of corruption crimes, including colluding with her longtime confidante, Choi Soon-sil, to take millions of dollars in bribes and extortion from Samsung and other major companies while she was in office.

She faced a prison term of more than two decades before Moon pardoned her in December, citing a need to promote unity in the politically divided nation. Choi remains in jail. Chang, of Dongkuk Steel Mill, was released on parole in 2018 with about six months left on a 3 1/2-year prison term on charges that he

embezzled millions of dollars in corporate funds and used some of it to gamble in Las Vegas.

South Korea's Supreme Court last year confirmed a suspended prison sentence for Kang, who headed STX from 2003 to 2014, on charges of embezzling corporate funds and other crimes.

A notable exclusion from Yoon's pardons was former President Lee Myung-bak, who in June was granted a temporary release from a 17-year prison term after prosecutors acknowledged his health problems.

Han, the justice minster, said that the government did not consider the pardons of any convicted politicians or government employees this time, saying that the focus was on the economy.

Lee, a CEO-turned-conservative hero before his fall from grace, was convicted of taking bribes from big businesses including Samsung, embezzling funds from a company that he owned, and other corruption-related crimes before and during his presidency from 2008 to 2013.

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